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NOTES BY MR. RUSKIN

ON

SAMUEL PROUT

AND

WILLIAM HUNT

81276

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A LOAN COLLECTION OF DRAWINGS

EXHIBITED AT

The Fine Art Society's Galleries,

148 NEW BOND STREET.

1879–80.

NOTE.

I HAVE to thank the kind friends who have contributed drawings. I regret that very many of them have had to be returned, simply because I had already to my hand examples which sufficiently illustrated the lessons I wished to teach in putting together these notes.

J. RUSKIN.

PREFACE.

IT has been only in compliance with the often and earnestly urged request of my friend Mr. Marcus Huish, that I have thrown the following notes together, on the works of two artists belonging to a time with which nearly all associations are now ended in the mind of general society; and of which my own memories, it seemed to me, could give little pleasure, (even if I succeeded in rendering them intelligible,) to a public indulged with far more curious arts, and eager for otherwise poignant interests than those which seemed admirable,—though not pretending to greatness, and were felt to be delightful,—though not provoking enthusiasm, in the quiet and little diverted lives of the English middle classes, 'sixty years since.'

It is especially to be remembered that drawings of this simple character were made for these same middle classes, exclusively: and even for the second order of the middle classes, more accurately expressed by the term 'bourgeoisie.' The great people always bought Canaletto, not Prout,

and Van Huysum, not Hunt. There was indeed no quality in the bright little water-colours, which could look other than pert in ghostly corridors, and petty in halls of state; but they gave an unquestionable tone of liberalmindedness to a suburban villa, and were the cheerfullest possible decorations for a moderate-sized breakfast-parlour, opening on a nicely mown lawn. Their liveliness even rose, on occasion, to the charity of beautifying the narrow chambers of those whom business or fixed habit still retained in the obscurity of London itself; and I remember with peculiar respect the pride of a benevolent physician, who never would exchange his neighbourhood to the poor of St. Giles's for the lucrative lustre of a West End Square, in wreathing his tiny little front-drawing-room with Hunt's loveliest apple-blossom, and taking the patients for whom he had prescribed fresh air, the next instant on a little visit to the country.

Nor was this adaptation to the tastes and circumstances of the London citizen, a constrained or obsequious compliance on the part of the kindly artists. They were themselves, in mind, as in habits of life, completely a part of the characteristic metropolitan population whom an occasional visit to the Continent always thrilled with surprise on finding themselves again among persons who familiarly spoke French; and whose summer holidays, though more customary, amused them nevertheless with the adventure, and beguiled them with the pastoral

charm, of an uninterrupted picnic. Mr. Prout lived at Brixton, just at the rural extremity of Cold Harbour Lane, where the spire of Brixton church, the principal architectural ornament of the neighbourhood, could not but greatly exalt, by comparison, the impressions received from that of Strasburg Cathedral, of the Hôtel de Ville of Bruxelles; and Mr. Hunt, though often in the spring and summer luxuriating in country lodgings, was only properly at home in the Hampstead road,* and never painted a cluster of nuts without some expression, visible enough by the manner of their presentation, of the pleasure it was to him to see them in the shell, instead of in a bag at the greengrocer's.

The lightly rippled level of this civic life lay, as will be easily imagined, far beneath the distractions, while it maintained itself meekly, yet severely, independent of the advantages, held out by the social system of what is most reverently called 'Town.' Neither the disposition, the health, nor the means of either artist admitted of their spending their evenings, in general, elsewhere than by their own firesides; nor could a spring levée of English peeresses and foreign ambassadors be invited by the modest painter whose only studio was his little back-parlour, commanding a partial view of the scullery steps and the water-butt. The fluctua-

* See his own inscription, with LONDON in capitals, under No. 132.

tions of moral and æsthetic sentiment in the public mind were of small moment to the humble colourist, who depended only on the consistency of its views on the subject of early strawberries: and the thrilling subjects presented by the events or politics of the day, were equally indifferent to the designer who invited interest to nothing later than the architecture of the 15th century. Even the treasures of scientific instruction, and marvels of physical discovery, were without material influence on the tranquillity of the two native painters' uneducated skill. Prout drew every lovely street in Europe without troubling himself to learn a single rule of perspective; while Hunt painted mossy banks for five-and-twenty years, without ever caring to know a Sphagnum from a Polypody, and embossed or embowered his birds' eggs to a perfection, which Greek connoisseurs would have assured us the mother had unsuspectingly sate on,—without enlarging his range of ornithological experience beyond the rarities of tomtit and hedge-sparrow.

This uncomplaining resignation of patronage, and unblushing blindness to instruction, were allied, in both painters, with a steady consistency in technical practice, which, from the first, and to the last, precluded both from all hope of promotion to the honours, as it withheld them from the peril of entanglement in the rivalries, connected with the system of exhibition in the Royal Academy. Mr. Prout's method of work was entirely founded on the

quite elementary qualities of white paper and black Cumberland lead; and expressly terminated within the narrow range of prismatic effects producible by a brown or blue outline, with a wash of ochre or cobalt. Mr. Hunt's early drawings depended for their peculiar charm on the most open and simple management of transparent colour; and his later ones, for their highest attainments, on the flexibility of a pigment which yielded to the slightest touch and softest motion of a hand always more sensitive than firm. The skill which unceasing practice, within limits thus modestly unrelaxed, and with facilities of instrument thus openly confessed, enabled each draughtsman in his special path to attain, was exerted with a vividness of instinct somewhat resembling that of animals, only in the slightest degree conscious of praise-worthiness, but animated by a healthy complacency, as little anxious for external sympathy as the self-content of a bee in the translucent symmetry of its cell, or of a chaffinch in the silver tracery of her nest,—and uniting, through the course of their uneventful and active lives, the frankness of the bird with the industry of the insect.

In all these points of view the drawings to which I venture, not without hesitation, to call the passing attention of the public, can claim regard only as examples of genius both narrowed and depressed; yet healthy enough to become more elastic under depression; and scintillant enough to

be made more vivid by contraction. But there are other respects in which these seemingly unimportant works challenge graver study; and illustrate phases of our own national mind,—I might perhaps say, even of national civilisation,—which coincide with many curious changes in social feelings; and may lead to results not easily calculable in social happiness.

If the reader has any familiarity with the galleries of painting in the great cities of Europe, he cannot but retain a clear, though somewhat monotonously calm, impression of the character of those polished flower-pieces, or still-life pieces, which occupy subordinate corners in their smaller rooms; and invite to moments of repose, or frivolity, the attention and imagination which have been wearied in admiring the attitudes of heroism, and sympathising with the sentiments of piety. Recalling to his memory the brightest examples of these, which his experience can supply, he will find that all the older ones agree,—if flower-pieces—in a certain courtliness and formality of arrangement, implying that the highest honours which flowers can attain are in being wreathed into grace of garlands, or assembled in variegation of bouquets, for the decoration of beauty, or flattery of noblesse. If fruit or still-life pieces, they agree no less distinctly in directness of reference to the supreme hour when the destiny of dignified fruit is to be accomplished in a royal dessert; and the furred and

feathered life of hill and forest may bear witness to the Wisdom of Providence by its extinction for the kitchen dresser.

Irrespectively of these ornamental virtues, and culinary utilities, the painter never seems to perceive any conditions of beauty in the things themselves, which would make them worth regard for their own sake: nor, even in these appointed functions, are they ever supposed to be worth painting, unless the pleasures they procure be distinguished as those of the most exalted society. No artists of the old school would ever think of constructing a subject out of the herbs of a cottage garden, or viands of a rural feast. Whatever interest was then taken in the life of the lower orders involved always some reference to their rudenesses or vices; and rarely exhibits itself in any other expression than that of contempt for their employments, and reproach to their recreation.

In all such particulars the feelings shown in the works of Hunt, and of the school with which he was associated, directly reverse those of the preceding age. So far from being garlanded into any polite symmetry, his primroses fresh from the bank, and hawthorns white from the hedge, confess at once their artless origin in the village lane,—have evidently been gathered only at the choice, and thrown down at the caprice, of the farmer's children, and cheerfully disclaim all hope of ever contributing to the splendours or felicities of the great. The bloom

with which he bedews the grape,—the frosted gold with which he frets the pine,—are spent chiefly to show what a visible grace there is in the fruits of the earth, which we may sometimes feel that it is rude to touch, and swinish to taste; and the tendernesses of hand and thought that soothe the rose-grey breast of the fallen dove, and weave the couch of moss for its quiet wings, propose no congratulation to the spectator on the future flavour of the bird in a pie.

It is a matter of extreme difficulty, but of no less interest, to distinguish, in this order of painting, what part of it has its origin in a plebeian—not to say vulgar—simplicity, which education would have invested with a severer charm; and what part is grounded on a real sense of natural beauty, more pure and tender than could be discerned amid the luxury of courts, or stooped to by the pride of nobles.

For an especial instance, the drawing of the interior, No. 174, may be taken as a final example of the confidence which the painter felt in his power of giving some kind of interest to the most homely objects, and rendering the transitions of ordinary light and shade impressive, though he had nothing more sacred to illuminate than a lettuce, and nothing more terrible to hide than a reaping-hook. The dim light from the flint-glass window, and the general disposition and scale of the objects it falls on, remind me sometimes, however unreason-

ably, of the little oratory into which the deeply-worn steps ascend from the Beauchamp Chapel at Warwick. But I know perfectly well, and partly acknowledge the rightness of his judgment, though I cannot analyse it, that Hunt would no more have painted that knightly interior instead of this, with helmets lying about instead of saucepans, and glowing heraldries staying the light instead of that sea-green lattice, than he would have gone for a walk round his farm in a court dress.

'Plebeian—not to say vulgar'—choice; but I fear that even 'vulgar,' with full emphasis, must be said sometimes in the end. Not that a pipkin of cream in Devonshire is to be thought of less reverently than a vase of oil or canister of bread in Attica; but that the English dairy-maid in her way can hold her own with the Attic Canephora, and the peasant children of all countries where leaves are green and waters clear, possess a grace of their own no less divine than that of branch and wave. And it is to be sorrowfully confessed that the good old peach and apple painter was curiously insensible to this brighter human beauty, and though he could scarcely pass a cottage door around his Berkshire home without seeing groups of which Correggio would have made Cupids, and Luini cherubs, turned away from them all, to watch the rough plough-boy at his dinner, or enliven a study of his parlour-maid at her glass (158), with the elegance of a red and green pincushion.

And yet, for all this, the subtle sense of beauty above referred to, was always in his mind, and may be proved, and partly illustrated, by notice of two very minute, but very constant, differences between his groups of still life, and those of the Dutch painters. In every flower-piece of pretension, by the masters of that old school, two accessory points of decoration are never absent. The first of these is the dew-drop, or rain-drop—it may be two or three drops, of either size, on one of the smoothest petals of the central flower. This is always, and quite openly, done to show how well the painter can do it,—not in the least with any enjoyment of wetness in the flower. The Dutchman never got a wet flower to paint from. He had his exquisite and exemplary poppy or tulip brought in from the market as he had occasion, and put on its dew-drops for it as a lady's dressing-maid puts on her diamonds, merely for state. But Hunt saw the flowers in his little garden really bright in the baptismal dawn, or drenched with the rain of noontide, and knew that no mortal could paint any real likeness of that heaven-shed light;—and never once attempted it;—you will find nothing in any of his pictures merely put on that you may try to wipe it off.

But there was a further *tour-de-force* demanded of the Dutch workman, without which all his happiest preceding achievements would have been unacknowledged. Not only a dewdrop, but, in some depth of bell, or cranny of leaf, a bee, or a

fly, was needful for the complete satisfaction of the connoisseur. In the articulation of the fly's legs, or neurography of the bee's wings, the Genius of painting was supposed to signify her accepted disciples; and their work went forth to the European world, thenceforward, without question, as worthy of its age and country. But, without recognising in myself, or desiring to encourage in my scholars, any unreasonable dislike or dread of the lower orders of living creatures, I trust that the reader will feel with me that none of Mr. Hunt's peaches or plums would be made daintier by the detection on them of even the most cunningly latent wasp, or cautiously rampant caterpillar; and will accept, without so much opposition as it met with forty years ago, my then first promulgated, but steadily since repeated assertion, that the 'modern painter' had in these matters less vanity than the ancient one, and better taste.

Another interesting evidence of Hunt's feeling for beauty is to be found in the unequal distribution of his pains to different parts of his subject. This is indeed, one of the peculiar characteristics of our modern manner, and in the abstract, not a laudable one. All the old masters, without exception, complete their pictures from corner to corner with a strictly driven level of deliberation; and whether it be a fold of drapery, a blade of grass, or a wreath of cloud, on which they are subordinately occupied, the pencil moves at the same tranquil pace, and

the qualities of the object are rendered with the same fixed attention. In this habitual virtue, the dull and the brilliant, the weak and the mighty, concur without exception; holding it for their first point of honour to be thorough craftsmen; and to carry on the solicitude of their skill throughout the piece, as an armourer would hammer a corslet, or a housewife knit a stocking, leaving no edge untempered, and no thread unfastened. Modern petulance and incompetence lead, on the contrary, to the flaunting of dexterity in one place, and the pretence of ease in another;—complete some portions of the subject with hypocritical affection, and abandon others in ostentatious contempt. In some few cases, the manner arises from a true eagerness of imagination, or kindly and natural desire for sympathy in particular likings; but in the plurality of instances, the habit allies itself with mistaken principles of art, and protects impatience and want of skill under the shield of philosophy.

Few modern pieces of oil-painting are more accomplished or deliberate than those of Meissonier: and in the example placed on the table in the centre of the room, his subject was one which he certainly would not have treated, consciously, with prosaic indignity of manner, or injurious economy of toil. Yet the inequality of workmanship has depressed what might have been a most sublime picture almost to the level of a scenic effect. The dress of the Emperor and housings of his steed are

wrought with the master's utmost care: but the landscape is nearly unintelligible, and the ground a mere conventional diaper of feeble green and grey.

It is difficult to describe the height to which the picture would have risen above its present power, if a ruined French village had been represented with Flemish precision amidst the autumnal twilight of the woods; and the ground over which the wearied horse bears his dreaming rider, made lovely with its native wild-flowers.

In all such instances, the hold which a true sense of beauty has over the painter's mind may be at once ascertained by observing the nature of the objects to which his pains have been devoted. No master with a fine instinct for colour would spend his time with deliberate preference on the straps and buckles of modern horse-furniture, rather than on the surrounding landscape or foreground flowers, though in a subject like this he would have felt it right to finish both, to the spectator's content, if not to his amazement. And among the numerous rustic scenes by Hunt which adorn these walls, though all are painted with force and spirit, none are recommended to our curiosity by an elaborate finish given to ungraceful objects. His final powers are only employed on motives like the dead doves in Nos. 139 and 145, accompanied by incidents more or less beautiful and seemly.

I must even further guard my last sentence, by the admission that the means by which his utmost

intentions of finish are accomplished, can never, in the most accurate sense, be termed 'elaborate.' When the thing to be represented is minute, the touches which express it are necessarily minute also; they cannot be bold on the edge of a nutshell, nor free within the sphere of a bird's nest; but they are always frank and clear, to a degree which may seem not only imperfect, but even harsh or offensive, to eyes trained in more tender or more formal schools. This broken execution by detached and sharply defined touches became indeed, in process of years, a manner in which the painter somewhat too visibly indulged, or prided himself; but it had its origin and authority in the care with which he followed the varieties of colour in the shadow, no less than in the lights, of even the smallest objects. It is easy to obtain smoothness and unity of gradation when working with a single tint, but if all accidents of local colour and all differences of hue between direct and reflected light are to be rendered with absolute purity, some breaking of the texture becomes inevitable. In many cases, also, of the most desirable colours, no pigments mixed on the palette, but only interlaced touches of pure tints on the paper, will attain the required effect. The indefinable primrose colour, for instance, of the glazed porringer in the foreground of No. 174 could not possibly have been given with a mixed tint. The breaking of grey through gold by which it has been reached is one of the prettiest pieces of

work to be seen in these rooms; it exhibits the utmost skill of the artist, and is an adequate justification of his usual manner.

Among the earliest statements of principles of art made in the Stones of Venice, one of those chiefly fortunate in obtaining credit with my readers was the course of argument urging frankness in the confession of the special means by which any artistic result has been obtained, and of the limitations which these appointed instruments, and the laws proper to the use of them, set to its scope. Thus the threads in tapestry, the tesseræ in mosaic, the joints of the stones in masonry, and the movements of the pencil in painting, are shown without hesitation by the greatest masters in those arts, and often enforced and accented by the most ingenious: while endeavours to conceal them,—as to make needlework look like pencilling, or efface, in painting, the rugged freedom or joyful lightness of its handiwork into the deceptive image of a natural surface, are, without any exception, signs of declining intelligence, and benumbed or misguided feelings.

I therefore esteem Hunt's work all the more exemplary in acknowledging without disguise the restrictions imposed on the use of water-colour as a medium for vigorously realistic effects: and I have placed pieces of it in my Oxford school as standards of imitative (as distinguished from decorative) colour, in the rightness and usefulness of which I have every day more confirmed trust. I am aware

of no other pieces of art, in modern days, at once so sincere and so accomplished: only let it be noted that I use the term 'sincere' in this case, not as imputing culpable fallacy to pictures of more imaginative power, but only as implying the unbiassed directness of aim at the realization of very simple facts, which is often impossible to the passions, or inconsistent with the plans, of greater designers.

In more cautiously guarded terms of praise, and with far less general proposal of their peculiar qualities for imitation, I have yet, both in my earlier books, and in recent lectures at Oxford, spoken of the pencil sketches of Prout with a reverence and enthusiasm which it is my chief personal object in the present exhibition to justify, or at least to explain; so that future readers may not be offended, as I have known some former ones to be, by expressions which seemed to them incompatible with the general tenor of my teaching.

It is quite true that my feelings towards this painter are much founded on, or at least coloured by, early associations; but I have never found the memories of my childhood beguile me into any undue admiration of the architecture in Billiter Street or Brunswick Square; and I believe the characters which first delighted me in the drawings of this—in his path unrivalled—artist, deserve the best attention and illustration of which in my advanced years I am capable.

The little drawing, No. 95, bought, I believe, by my grandfather, hung in the corner of our little dining parlour at Herne Hill as early as I can remember; and had a most fateful and continual power over my childish mind. Men are made what they finally become, only by the external accidents which are in harmony with their inner nature. I was not made a student of Gothic merely because this little drawing of Prout's was the first I knew; but the hereditary love of antiquity, and thirst for country life, which were as natural to me as a little jackdaw's taste for steeples, or dabchick's for reeds, were directed and tempered in a very definite way by the qualities of this single and simple drawing.

In the first place, it taught me generally to like ruggedness; and the conditions of joint in moulding, and fitting of stones in walls which were most weather-worn, and like the grey dykes of a Cumberland hill-side. This predilection—passion, I might more truly call it—holds me yet so strongly, that I can never quite justly conceive the satisfaction of the original builders, even of the most delicate edifice, in seeing its comely stones well set together. Giotto's tower, and the subtly Cyclopean walls of early Verona, have indeed chastised the prejudice out of me, so far as regards work in marble enriched with mosaic and pure sculpture; but I had almost rather see Furness or Fountains Abbey strewed in grass-grown heaps by their brooksides, than in the first glow and close setting of their fresh-hewn sand-

stone. Whatever is rationally justifiable in this feeling, so far as it is dependent on just reverence for the signs of antiquity, and may therefore be trusted to, as existing generally in the minds of persons of thoughtful temperament, was enough explained, long ago, in the passages of the Seven Lamps of Architecture, which, the book not being now generally accessible, I reprint in Appendix I; but openness of joints and roughness of masonry are not exclusively signs of age or decay in buildings; and I did not at that time enough insist on the propriety, and even the grace, of such forms of literal 'rustication' * as are compelled by coarseness of materials, and plainness of builders, when proper regard is had to economy, and just honour rendered to provincial custom and local handicraft. These are now so little considered that the chief difficulties I have had in the minute architectural efforts possible at Brantwood have been to persuade my Coniston builder into satisfaction with Coniston slate; and retention of Coniston manners in dressing — or rather, leaving undressed—its primitively fractured edges. If I ever left him alone for a day, some corner stone was sure to be sent for from Bath or Portland, and the ledges I had left to invite stone-

* All the forms of massive foundation of which the aspect, in buildings of pretension, has been described by this word, took their origin from the palaces in Florence, whose foundations were laid with unchiselled blocks of the grey gritstone of Fésole, and looked like a piece of its crags.

crop and swallows, trimmed away in the advanced style of the railway station at Carnforth.

There is more however to be noted in this little old-fashioned painting, than mere delight in weedy eaves and mortarless walls. Pre-eminently its repose in such placid subjects of thought as the cottage, and its neighbouring wood, contain for an easily-pleased observer, without the least recommendation of them by graceful incident, or plausible story. If we can be content with sunshine on our old brown roof, and the sober green of a commonplace English wood, protected by a still more commonplace tarred paling, and allowing the fancy therefore not to expatiate even so far as the hope of a walk in it—it is well;—and if not,—poor Prout has no more to offer us, and will not even concede the hope that one of those diagonally-dressed children may be the least pretty, or provoke us, by the gleam of a riband, or quaintness of a toy, into asking so much as what the itinerant pedlar has in his basket.

I was waiting for a train the other day at Dover, and in an old-fashioned print-shop on the hill up to the Priory station, saw a piece of as old-fashioned picture-making, elaborately engraved, and of curious interest to me, at the moment, with reference to my present essay. It belonged to the dull British school which was founded on conscientious following of the miniature methods and crowded incidents of Dutch painting; and always dutifully proposed to give the spectator as much entertainment

as could be collected into the given space of canvas. There was an ideal village street to begin with, the first cottage gable at the corner having more painting (and very good and pretty painting) spent on the mere thatch of it, than there is in the entire Prout drawing under our notice. Beyond the laborious gable came some delicately-branched trees; and then the village street, in and out, half a-mile long, with shops, and signs, and what not; and then the orthodox church-steeple, and then more trees, and then a sky with rolling white clouds after Wouvermans;—but all this, though the collected quantity of it would have made half-a-dozen country villages, if well pulled out, was only the beginning of the subject. Gable, street, church, rookery, and sky, were all, in the painter's mind, too thin and spare entertainment. So out of the gable-window looked a frightened old woman—out of the cottage-door rushed an angry old man; over the garden palings tumbled two evil-minded boys,—after the evil-minded boys rushed an indignantly-minded dog; and in the centre of the foreground, cynosure of the composition, were, a couple of fighting-cocks,—one fallen, the other crowing for conquest;—highly finished, both, from wattle to spur. And the absolute pictorial value of the whole,—church and sky—village and startled inhabitants—vagabond boys—vindictive dog—and victorious bird, (the title of the picture being 'the Moment of Victory')—the intrinsic value of the whole, I say, being—not the twentieth

part of a Hunt's five-minutes sketch of one cock's feather.

And yet it was all prettily painted,—as I said; and possessed every conceivable quality that can be taught in a school, or bought for money: and the artist who did it had probably in private life, a fair average quantity of sense and feeling, but had left both out of his picture, in order to imitate what he had been taught was fine, and produce what he expected would pay.

Take another instance, more curious, and nearer to matters in hand. The little photograph, No. 117 on the south side of the screen, was made in 1858 (by my own setting of the camera), in the courtyard of one of the prettiest yet remaining fragments of 15th century domestic buildings in Abbeville. The natural vineleaves consent in grace and glow with the life of the old wood carving; and though the modern white porcelain image ill replaces the revolution-deposed Madonna, and only pedestals of saints, and canopies, are left on the propping beams of the gateway; and though the cask, and cooper's tools, and gardener's spade and ladder are little in accord with what was once stately in the gate, and graceful in the winding stair,—the declining shadows of the past mingle with the hardship of the present day in no unkindly sadness; and the little angle of courtyard, if tenderly painted in the depression of its fate, has enough still to occupy as much of our best thought as may be

modesty claimed for his picture by any master not of the highest order.

But these motives of wise and gentle feeling would not appeal to the public mind in competitive exhibition. Such efforts as are made by our own landscapists to keep record of any fast vanishing scenes of the kind, are scarcely with good-will accepted even in our minor art galleries: and leave to share in the lustre of the Parisian 'Salon de 1873' could only be hoped for by the author of the composition from which the photograph, No. 118, is taken, on condition of his giving pungency to the feeble savour of architectural study by a condiment of love, assassination, and despair.

It will not, I trust, be supposed that in anything I have said, or may presently further say, I have the smallest intention of diminishing the praise of nobly dramatic or pathetic pictures. The best years of my life have been spent in the endeavour to illustrate the neglected greatest of these, in Venice, Milan, and Rome: while my last and most deliberate writings have lost much of their influence with the public by disagreeably insisting that the duty of a great painter was rather to improve them, than amuse. But it remains always a sure elementary principle that interest in the story of pictures does not in the least signify a relative interest in the art of painting, or in the continual beauty and calm virtue of nature: and that the wholesomest manner in which the intelligence of

young people can be developed (I may say, even, the intelligence of modest old people cultivated), in matters of this kind, is by inducing them accurately to understand what painting is as mere painting, and music as mere music, before they are led into further question of the uses of either, in policy, morals, or religion.

And I cannot but recollect with feelings of considerable refreshment, in these days of the deep, the lofty, and the mysterious, what a simple company of connoisseurs we were, who crowded into happy meeting, on the first Mondays in Mays of long ago, in the bright large room of the old Water-colour Society; and discussed, with holiday gaiety, the unimposing merits of the favourites, from whose pencils we knew precisely what to expect, and by whom we were never either disappointed or surprised. Copley Fielding used to paint fishing-boats for us, in a fresh breeze, 'Off Dover,' 'Off Ramsgate,' 'Off the Needles,'—off everywhere on the south coast where any body had been last autumn; but we were always kept pleasantly in sight of land, and never saw so much as a gun fired in distress. Mr. Robson would occasionally paint a Bard, on a heathery crag in Wales; or—it might be—a Lady of the Lake on a similar piece of Scottish foreground,—'Benvenue in the distance.' A little fighting, in the time of Charles the First, was permitted to Mr. Cattermole; and Mr. Cristall would sometimes invite virtuous sympathy to attend the meeting of two lovers at a

Wishing gate or a Holy well. But the furthest flights even of these poetical members of the Society were seldom beyond the confines of the British Islands; the vague dominions of the air, and vasty ones of the deep, were held to be practically unvoyageable by our un-Dædal pinions, and on the safe level of our native soil, the sturdy statistics of Mr. De Wint, and blunt pastorals of Mr. Cox, restrained within the limits of probability and sobriety, alike the fancy of the idle, and the ambition of the vain.

It became, however, by common and tacit consent Mr. Prout's privilege, and it remained his privilege exclusively, to introduce foreign elements of romance and amazement into this—perhaps slightly fenny—atmosphere, of English common sense. In contrast with our Midland locks and barges, his 'On the Grand Canal, Venice,' was an Arabian enchantment; among the mildly elegiac country churchyards of Llangollen or Stoke Pogis, his 'Sepulchral Monuments at Verona' were Shakespearian tragedy; and to us who had just come into the room out of Finsbury or Mincing Lane, his 'Street in Nuremburg' was a German fairy tale. But we none of us recognised, then, (and I know not how far any of us recognise yet), that these feelings of ours were dependent on the mediation of a genius as earnest as it was humble, doing work not in its essence romantic at all; but, on the contrary, the only quite useful, faithful, and evermore serviceable work that the Society—by hand of any of its members—had ever

done, or could ever, in that phase of its existence, do: containing, moreover, a statement of certain social facts only to be gathered, and image of certain pathetic beauties only to be seen, at that particular moment in the history of (what we are pleased to call) civilisation.

'As earnest,' I repeat,—'as it was humble.' The drawings actually shown on the Exhibition walls gave no sufficient clue to Prout's real character, and no intimation whatever of his pauseless industry. He differed in these unguessed methods of toil wholly from the other members of the Society. De Wint's morning and afternoon sketches from nature, with a few solidifying touches, were at once ready for their frames. Fielding's misty downs and dancing seas were softened into their distances of azure, and swept into their hollows of foam, at his ease, in his study, with conventional ability, and lightly burdened memory. Hunt's models lay on the little table at his side all day; or stood as long as he liked by the barn-door, for a penny. But Prout's had to be far sought, and with difficulty detailed and secured: the figures gliding on the causeway or mingling in the market-place, stayed not his leisure; and his drawings prepared for the Water-colour room were usually no more than mechanical abstracts, made absolutely for support of his household, from the really vivid sketches which, with the whole instinct and joy of his nature, he made all through the cities of ancient Christendom, without an instant of flagging energy,

and without a thought of money payment. They became to him afterwards a precious library, of which he never parted with a single volume as long as he lived. But it was the necessary consequence of the devotion of his main strength to the obtaining of these studies, that at his death they remained a principal part of the provision left for his family, and were therefore necessarily scattered. I cannot conceive any object more directly tending to the best interests of our students both in art and history, than the reassembling a chosen series of them for the nation, as opportunity may be given.

Let me, however, before entering on any special notice of those which Mr. Huish has been able at this time, (and I myself by the good help of the painter's son, Mr. Gillespie Prout), to obtain for exhibition, state in all clearness the terms under which they should be judged, and may be enjoyed. For just as we ought not to match a wood-block of Bewick's against a fresco by Correggio, we must not compare a pencil outline of Prout's with any such ideals of finished street effect as Flemish painting once produced. Prout is not a colourist, nor in any extended or complete sense of the word, a painter. He is essentially a draughtsman with the lead pencil, as Durer was essentially a draughtsman with the burin, and Bewick on the wood-block. And the chief art-virtue of the pieces here exhibited is the intellectual abstraction which represents many features of things with few lines.

Take the little view in Amiens, No. 7, showing the west front of the cathedral in the distance. That front is enriched with complex ranks of arcade and pinnacle, which it would take days to outline perfectly, and which, seen at the distance assumed in this drawing, gather into a mystery which no fineness of hand could imitatively follow. But all this has been abstracted into a few steady lines, with an intelligence of choice and precision of notation which build the cathedral as if it stood there, and in such accurate likeness that it could be recognised at a glance from every other mass of Gothic in Europe.

That drawing dependent on abstraction of this kind, in which forms are expressed rather as a mineralogist would draw a crystal than with any investing mystery of shade or effect, cannot be carried beyond the point assigned, nor convey any sense of extreme beauty or majesty, when these really exist in its subject, must be conceded at once, and in full. But there is a great deal of scenery in this Europe of ours, not lovely; and a great deal of habitation in this Europe of ours not sublime, yet both extremely worthy of being recorded in a briefly crystalline manner. And with scenes only, and dwellings only, of this ruder nature, Prout is concerned.

Take for instance the general facts respecting the valley of the Somme, collected in this little sketch of Amiens. That river, and the Oise, with other neighbouring minor streams, flow through a

chalk district intersected by very ancient valleys, filled mostly with peat up to sea-level, but carrying off a large portion of the rainfall over the whole surface of the upper plains, which, open and arable, retain scarcely any moisture in morasses, pools, or deep grass. The rivers, therefore, though with little fall, run always fast and brimfull, divided into many serviceable branches and runlets; while the older villages and cities on their banks are built of timber and brick, or in the poorer cottages, timber and clay; but their churches of an adhesive and durable chalk rock, yielding itself with the utmost ease to dexterities of deep incision, and relieving, at first with lace-like whiteness, and always with a pleasant pearly grey, the shadows so obtained. No sensual arts or wealthy insolences have ever defiled or distorted the quiet temper of the northern French race, and in this busy little water-street of Amiens (you see that Prout has carefully indicated its rapid current—a navigable and baptismal brook, past step and door—water that one can float with and wash with, not a viscous vomit of black poison, like an English river) you have clearly pictured to you a state of peasant life assembled in the fellowship of a city, yet with as little pride as if still in the glades of Arden, and united chiefly for the sake of mere neighbourliness; and the sense of benediction and guardianship in the everywhere visible pinnacles of the temple built by their Fathers, nor yet forsaken by their Fathers' God.

All this can be enough told in a few rightly laid pencil lines, and more, it is needless to tell of so lowly provincial life.

Needless, at least, for the general public. For the closer student of architecture, finer drawing may be needed; but even for such keener requirement Prout will not, for a time, fail us.

Five-and-twenty miles down the Somme lies the little ramparted town of Abbeville; rampart only of the Grand Monarque's time, but the walls of might long ago, in the days of Crécy; and few French provincial bourgs had then more numerous or beautiful monasteries,— hospitals,— chapels,— and churches. Of the central St. Wulfran, never completed, there remain only the colossal nave, the ruined transept walls, and the lordly towers and porches of the west front. The drawing No. 5, quite one of the best examples of Prout's central time in the room, most faithfully represents this western pile of tracery and fretwork, with the filial richness of the timber houses that once stood round it.

None of the beautiful ones here seen are now left; and one day, perhaps, even France herself will be grateful to the wandering Londoner, who drew them as they once were, and copied, without quite understanding, every sign and word on them.

And as one of the few remaining true records of fifteenth-century France,—such as her vestiges remained after all the wreck of revolution and recoil of war had passed over them, this pencil

drawing, slight as it seems, may well take rank beside any pen-sketch by Holbein in Augsburg, or Gentil Bellini in Venice. As a piece of composition and general treatment it might be reasoned on for days; for the cunning choices of omission, the delicate little dexterities of adjustment,—the accents without vulgarity, and reticences without affectation,—the exactly enough everywhere, to secure an impression of reality, and the instant pause at the moment when another touch would have been tiresome,—are, in the soberest truth, more wonderful than most of the disciplined compositions of the greater masters, for no scruple checks *them* for an instant in changing or introducing what they chose; but Prout gives literal, and all but servile, portrait, only managing somehow to get the chequers of woodwork to carry down the richness of the towers into the houses; then to get the broad white wall of the nearer houses to contrast with both, and then sets the transept turret to peep over the roof just enough to etherialize its practicality, and the black figure to come in front of it to give lustre to its whiteness; and so on throughout, down to the last and minutest touches:—the incomprehensiblest classical sonata is not more artificial—the sparklingest painted window not more vivid, and the sharpest photograph not half so natural.

In sequence of this drawing, I may point out seven others of like value, equally estimable and unreplaceable, both in matters of Art, and—I use

the word, as will be seen presently, in its full force—of History,—namely

No. 9. Evreux.
No. 10. Strasburg.
No. 19. Antwerp.
No. 47. Domo d'Ossola.
No. 48. Como.
No. 65. Bologna.
No. 71. The Coliseum.

I choose these eight drawings (counting the Abbeville), four belonging to North France and Germany, four to Italy, of which the Northern ones do indeed utterly represent the spirit of the architecture chosen; but the Southern subjects are much more restricted in expression, for Prout was quite unable to draw the buildings of the highest Italian school: yet he has given the vital look of Italy in his day more truly than any other landscapist, be he who he may; and not excepting even Turner, for *his* ideal is always distinctly Turnerian, and not the mere blunt, and sorrowful fact.

You might perhaps, and very easily, think at first that these Prout subjects were as much 'Proutized' (Copley Fielding first used that word to me) as Turner's were Turnerized. They are not so, by any manner of means, or rather, they are so by manner and means only, not by sight or heart. Turner saw things as Shelley or Keats did; and with perfectly comprehensive power, gave all that

such eyes can summon, to gild, or veil, the fatalities of material truth. But Prout saw only what all the world sees, what is substantially and demonstrably there; and drew that reality, in his much arrested and humble manner indeed, but with perfectly apostolic faithfulness. He reflected the scene like some rough old Etruscan mirror—jagged, broken, blurred, if you will, but *It*, the thing itself still; while Turner gives *it*, and himself too, and ever so much of fairyland besides. His Florence or Nemi compels me to think, as a scholar, or (for so much of one as may be in me) a poet; but Prout's harbour of old Como is utterly and positively the very harbour I landed in when I was a boy of fourteen, after a day's rowing from Cadenabbia, and it makes me young again, and hot, and happy, to look at it. And that Bologna! Well, the tower *does* lean a little too far over, certainly; but what blessedness to be actually there, and to think we shall be in Venice to-morrow!

But note that the first condition of all these really great drawings (as indeed for all kinds of other good,) is unaffectedness. If ever Prout strains a nerve, or begins to think what other people will say or feel;—nay, if he ever allows his own real faculty of chiaroscuro to pronounce itself consciously, he falls into fourth and fifth rate work directly; and the entire force of him can be found only where it has been called into cheerful exertion by subjects moderately, yet throughout delightful to him; which

present no difficulties to be conquered, no discords to be reconciled, and have just enough of clarion in them to rouse him to his paces, without provoking him to prance or capriole.

I should thus rank the drawing of Como (48) as quite of the first class, and in the front rank of that class. Unattractive at first, its interest will increase every moment that you stay by it, and every little piece of it is a separate picture, all the better in itself for its subjection to the whole.

You may at first think the glassless windows too black. But nothing can be too black for an open window in a sunny Italian wall, at so short a distance. You may think the hills too light, but nothing can be too light for olive hills in midday summer. 'They would have come dark against the sky?' Yes, certainly; but we don't pretend to draw Italian skies,—only the ruined port of Como, which is verily here before us—(alas! at Como no more, having long since been filled up, levelled, and gravelled, and made an 'esplanade' for modern Italy to spit over in its idle afternoons.) But take the lens to the old group of houses:—they will become as interesting as a missal illumination if you only look carefully enough to see how Prout varied those twenty-seven black holes, so that literally not one of them shall be like another. The grand old Comasque builder of the twelfth century arches below (the whole school of Lombardic masonry being originally Comasque) varied them

to his hand enough in height and width—but he invents a new tiny picture in chiaroscuro to put under every arch, and then knits all together with the central boats;—literally knits, for you see the mast of one of them catches up the cross-stick—stitch we might call it—that the clothes hung on between the balconies; and then the little figures on the left catch up the pillars like meshes in basket-work, and then the white awning of the boat on the left repeats the mass of wall, taking the stiffness out of it, while the reflections of arches, with the other figures, and the near black freights, carry all the best of it, broken and rippling, to the bitter shore.

But the drawing of the Coliseum at Rome, No. 71, has still higher claim to our consideration; in it were reserved, and in all points, rarer powers of expressing magnitude and solitude. It is so majestic in manner that it would quite have borne being set beside the photograph of Turner's drawing at Farnley: had it been fair to match mere outline against a finished composition. For Prout was, and he remains, the only one of our artists who entirely shared Turner's sense of magnitude, as the sign of past human effort, or of natural force: and I must be so far tedious as to explain this metaphysical point at some length. Of all forms of artistic susceptibility, reverent perception of true*, magnitude is the rarest. No

* Reckless accumulation of *false* magnitude—as by John

general conclusion has become more clear to my experience than this—strange as it may seem at first statement, that a painter's mind, *typically*, recognises no charm in physical vastness: and will, if it must choose between two evils by preference work on a reduced, rather than an enlarged, scale; and for subject, paint miniature rather than mass. Human form is always given by the great masters either of the natural size, or somewhat less,—(unless under fixed conditions of distance which require perspective enlargement) and no sort or shadow of pleasure is ever taken by the strongest designers in bulk of matter. Veronese never paints shafts of pillars more than two feet in diameter, or thereabouts, and only from fifteen to twenty feet in height. Titian's beech trunks in the Peter Martyr were not a foot across at the thickest, while his mountains are merely blue spaces of graceful shape, and are never accurately enough drawn to give even a suggestion of scale. And in the entire range of Venetian marine painting there is not one large wave.

Among our own recent landscape painters, while occasionally great feeling is shown for space, or mystery, there is none for essential magnitude. Stanfield was just as happy in drawing the East

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Martin, is merely a vulgar weakness of brain, allied to nightmare; so also the colossal works of decadent states in sculpture and architecture, which are always insolent; not reverent.

cliff at Hastings as the Rock of Ischia; and painted the little sandy jut of crag far better than the coned volcano. Fielding asked for no more stupendous summits than those of Saddleback or Wrynose—and never attempted the grandeur even of Yorkshire scars, finding their articulated geology troublesome. Sometimes David Roberts made a praiseworthy effort to explain the size of a pillar at Thebes, or a tower in the Alhambra; but only in cases where the character of largeness had been forced upon his attention, as the quality to be observed by himself, and recommended to the observation of others. He never felt, or would have tried to make anyone else feel—the weight of an ordinary boulder stone, or the hollow of an old chestnut stem, or the height of a gathering thunder-cloud. In the real apprehension of measurable magnitude, magnitude in things clearly seen—stones, trees, clouds, or towers—Turner and Prout stand—they two—absolutely side by side—otherwise companionless.

Measurable magnitude, observe:—and therefore wonderful. If you can't see the difference between the domes of the National Gallery and of St. Paul's:—much more if you can't see the difference between Shanklin Chine and the Via Mala, (and most people can't!)—you will never care either for Turner or Prout;—nor can you care rightly for them unless you have an intellectual pleasure in construction, and know and feel that it is more difficult to build a tower securely four hundred feet high, than forty—

and that the pillar of cloud above the crater of Etna, standing two thousand feet forth from the lips of it, means a natural force greater than the puff of a railway boiler. The quiet and calm feeling of reverence for this kind of power, and the accurate habit of rendering it,—(see notes on the Sketches of Strasburg, No. 10, and Drachenfels, No. 28) are always connected, so far as I have observed, with some parallel justice in the estimate of spiritual order and power in human life and its laws:—nor is there any faculty of my own mind—among those to which I owe whatever useful results it may have reached—of which I am so gratefully conscious.

There is one further point—and if my preface has hitherto been too garrulous, it must be grave in notice of this at the close,—in which Turner, Bewick, Hunt, and Prout, all four agree—that they can draw the poor, but not the rich. They acknowledge with affection, whether for principal or accessory subjects of their art, the British farmer, the British sailor,* the British marketwoman, and the

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* Including, of course, the British soldier; but for Turner, a ship of the Line was pictorially better material than a field battery; else he would just as gladly have painted Albuera as Trafalgar. I am intensely anxious, by the way, to find out where a small picture of his greatest time may now be dwelling,—a stranded English frigate engaging the batteries on the French coast at sunset (she got off at the flood-tide in the morning); I want to get it, if possible, for the St. George's Museum at Sheffield.

British workman. They agree unanimously in ignoring the British gentleman. Let the British gentleman lay it to heart; and ask himself why.

The general answer is long, and manifold. But, with respect to the separate work of Prout, there is a very precious piece of instruction in it, respecting national prosperity and policy, which may be gathered with a few glances.

You see how all his best pieces depend on figures either crowded in market-places, or pausing (lounging, it may be) in quiet streets,—you will not find in the entire series of subjects here assembled from his hand—a single figure in a hurry! He ignores, you see—not only the British Gentleman;—but every necessary condition, nowadays, of British Business!

Look again, and see if you can find a single figure exerting all its strength. A couple of men rolling a single cask, perhaps; here and there a woman with rather a large bundle on her head—any more athletic display than these, you seek in vain.

He ignores even the British Boat-race—and British muscular divinity, and British Muscular Art.

His figures are all as quiet as the Cathedral of Chartres! 'Because he could not make them move'

For the rest, I think the British gentleman may partly see his way to the answer of the above question if he will faithfully consider with himself how it comes to pass that, always fearless in the field, he is cowardly in the House,—and always generous in the field,—is yet meanly cunning, and—too often—malignant, in the House.

—think you? Nay, not so. Some of them—(that figure on the sands in the Calais, for instance), you can scarcely think are standing still—but they all move quietly. The real reason is that *he* understood—and *we* do not, the meaning of the word—'quiet.'

He understood it, personally, and for himself: practically and for others. Take this one fact—of his quiet dealings with men, and think over it. In his early days he had established a useful and steady connection with the country dealers,—that is to say, with the leading printsellers in the county towns and principal watering-places. He supplied them with pretty drawings of understood size and price, which were nearly always in tranquil demand by the better class of customers. The understood size was about 10 inches by 14 or 15, and the fixed price, six guineas. The dealer charged from seven to ten, according to the pleasantness of the drawing. I bought the 'Venice,' for instance, No. 55, from Mr. Hewitt of Leamington—for eight guineas.

The modern fashionable interest in—what we suppose to be art—had just begun to show itself a few years before Prout's death; and he was frequently advised to raise his prices. But he never raised them a shilling to his old customers.*

* Nor greatly to his new ones. The drawings made for the Water-colour room were usually more elaborate, and, justly, a little higher in price, but my father bought the Lisieux, No. 13, off its walls, for eighteen guineas.

They were supplied with all the drawings they wanted, at six guineas each—to the end. A very peaceful method of dealing, and under the true ancient laws ordained by Athena of the Agora, and St. James of the Rialto.

Athena, observe, of the Agora, or Market *Place*. And St. James of the Deep Stream, or Market *River*. The Angels of Honest Sale and Honest Porterage; such honest porterage being the true grandeur of the Grand Canal, and of all other canals, rivers, sounds, and seas that ever moved in wavering morris under the night. And the eternally electric light of the embankment of that Rialto stream was shed upon it by the Cross:—know you that for certain, you dwellers by high embanked and steamer-burdened Thames.

And learn from your poor wandering painter this lesson—for sum of the best he had to give you, (it is the Alpha of the Laws of true human life)—that no city is prosperous in the sight of heaven, unless the peasant sells in its market—adding this lesson of Gentile Bellini's for the Omega, that no city is ever righteous in the Sight of Heaven—unless the Noble walks in its street.

NOTES ON THE DRAWINGS.

For complete Index see page 99.

I.—PROUT.

THE reader will find, ending this pamphlet, a continuous index to the whole collection of drawings. In this descriptive text, I allow myself to pause in explanatory, or wander in discursive, statement, just as may seem to me most helpful to the student, or most likely to interest the general visitor.

I begin with the series of pencil drawings by Prout, which were my principal object in promoting this exhibition. Of these I have chosen seventy, all of high quality, and arranged so as to illustrate the outgoing course of an old-fashioned Continental tour, beginning at Calais, and ending at Rome. Following the order of these with attention, an intelligent observer may learn many things—not to his hurt.

Their dates, it will be noticed, are never given by the artist himself—except in the day; never the year—nor is there anything in the progress of Prout's skill, or in his changes of manner, the account of which need detain us long. From earliest boyhood to the day of

his death, he drew firmly, and never scrabbled or blurred. Not a single line or dot is ever laid without positive intention,* and the care needful to fulfil that intention. This is already a consummate virtue. But the magnificent certainty and ease, united, which it enabled him to obtain, are only seen to the full in drawings of his middle time. Not in decrepitude, but in mistaken effort, for which, to my sorrow, I was partly myself answerable, he endeavoured in later journeys to make his sketches more accurate in detail of tracery and sculpture; and they lost in feeling what they gained in technical exactness and elaboration. Of these later drawings only three are included in this series, 4, 8, and 17; their peculiar character will however be at once discernible.

His incipient work was distinguished by two specialties—the use of a grey washed tint with the pencil, a practice entirely abandoned in his great time, (though he will always make notes of *colour* frankly); and the insisting on minor pieces of broken texture, in small stones, bricks, grass, or any little picturesque incidents, with loss of largeness and repose. The little study of the apse of Worms Cathedral (32), a most careful early drawing, shows these faults characteristically; the Prague (23) is as definite an example of his great central manner, and even Turner's outline is not more faultless, though more complete. For the rest, Turner himself shared in the earlier weakness of more sharply dotted and sprinkled black touches, and practised, contemporaneously, the wash of grey tint with the pencil. The chief use of the method to the young student is in its compelling him to divide his masses clearly; and I used it much myself in early sketches, such as that of

* See the exception proving the rule, in a single line, in No. 12, there noted.

the Aventine, No. 104*a*, for mere cleanliness and comfort in security of shadow—rather than the always rubbing and vanishing blacklead. But it is an entirely restricted method, and must be abandoned in all advanced study, and the pencil used alone, both for shade and line, until the finer gradations of shadow are understood. *Then* colour may be used with the pencil for notation, and every power at once is in the workman's hands. The two first studies in our series are perfect instances of this conclusive method.*

There were more reasons, and better ones, than the students of to-day would suppose, for his not adopting it oftener. The subjects in Cornwall and Derbyshire by which his mind was first formed, were most of them wholly discouraging in colour, if not gloomy or offensive. Grey blocks of whinstone, black timbers, and broken walls of clay, needed no iridescent illustration; the heath and stonecrop were beyond his skill; and, had he painted them with the staunchest efforts, would not have been translatable into the coarse lithographs for Ackermann's drawing-books, the publication of which was at that time a principal source of income to him. His richer Continental subjects of later times were often quite as independent of colour, and in nearly every case taken under circumstances rendering its imitation impossible. He might be permitted by indulgent police to stop a thoroughfare for an hour or two with a crowd of admirers, but by no means to settle himself in a comfortable tent upon the pavement for a couple of months, or set up a gipsy encampment of pots and easel in the middle of the market-place. Also, his constitution, as delicate as it was sanguine, admitted indeed of his sit-

* For further notes on the methods of shade proper to the great masters, the reader may consult the third and fourth numbers of my *Laws of Fésole*.

ting without harm for half-an-hour in a shady lane, or basking for part of the forenoon in a sunny piazza, but would have broken down at once under the continuous strain necessary to paint a picture in the open air. And under these conditions the wonder is only how he did so much that was attentive and true, and that even his most conventional water-colours are so refined in light and shade that even the slightest become almost majestic when engraved.

I.

C Sketch on the spot, of the best time and highest quality,—the clouds put in as they stood,—the brig as she lay,—the figures where they measure the space of sand, and give the look of busy desolateness, which poor Calais — crown jewel of England—had fallen to in our day—Prout's and mine. You see the size of the steam-packet of the period; you may trust Prout's measure of its magnitude, as aforesaid. So also of belfry, lighthouse, and church,—very dear all to the old painter, as to me. I gave my own drawing of the lighthouse and belfry, (No. 104, on the screen) to the author of *Rab and his Friends*, who has lent it me for comparison.* My drawing of the church spire is lost to me, but somewhere about in the world, I hope, and perhaps may be yet got hold of, and kept with this drawing, for memory of old Calais, and illustration of what was

* It was exhibited here last year, but is shown again for proof of Prout's fidelity in distant form.

meant by the opening passage of the fourth volume of *Modern Painters.* (Appendix II.)

Take the lens* to the gate of the tower (above the steamer) and see how, in such a little bit, the architecture is truly told. Compare Hogarth's Gate of Calais.

2. CALAIS OLD PIER.

Turner's great subject. But Turner's being earlier taken, while the English packet was still only a fast-sailing cutter,—(steam unthought of!) A perfect gem of masterful study, and quiet feeling of the facts of eternal sea and shore.

The solemnly rendered mystery of the deep and far sea; the sway of the great waves entering over the bar at the harbour's mouth; the ebbing away of the sand at the angle of the pier; the heaping of it in hills against its nearer side,† and the way in which all is made huge, bleak, and wild by the deeper tone of the dark sail and figure, are all efforts of the highest art faculty, which we cannot too much honour and thank.

3. STUDIES OF FRENCH AND NETHERLAND FIGURES AND DILIGENCES.

Exemplary in the manner of abstract, and perfect in figure drawing, for *his* purposes. They are poor persons, you see—all of them. Not quite equal to Miss Kate Greenaway's in grace, nor to

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* For proper study of any good work in painting or drawing the student should always have in his hand a magnifying-glass of moderate power, from two to three inches in diameter.

† Compare the sentence respecting this same place, Appendix II., bottom of p. 93, 'surfy sand, and hillocked shore.'

Mrs. Allingham's in face; (they, therefore, you observe, have mostly their backs to us). But both Miss Kate and Mrs. Allingham might do better duty to their day, and better honour to their art, if they would paint, as verily, some of these poor country people in far-away places, rather than the high-bred prettinesses or fond imaginations, which are the best they have given us yet for antidote to the misery of London.

4. ABBEVILLE. CHURCH OF ST. WULFRAN.

Seen from the west, over old houses (since destroyed). Of the artist's best time and manner. See Preface, page 33.

5. ABBEVILLE. CHURCH OF ST. WULFRAN,—THE NORTH-WESTERN TOWER, WITH OLD HOUSES.

Elaborate. Of the late time, but not in the highest degree good. The chiaroscuro of the pinnacles evidently caught on the spot, but not carried through the drawing rightly, and the whole much mannered. Precious, however, for all that.

6. PHOTOGRAPH OF THE PORCHES OF ST. WULFRAN ABBEVILLE.

7. AMIENS.

One of the best of the best time. See Preface, page 31, and compare the extract from *Modern Painters*, given in Appendix III., page 94.

8. CHAPEL OF THE HOLY SEPULCHRE IN ST. JAQUES, DIEPPE.

One of the best studies of the last period. See further notes on it under the number 17.

9. Evreux.

Perfect sketch of the best time, and most notable for the exquisite grace of proportion in its wooden belfry. No architect, however accurate in his measurements—no artist, however sensitive in his admiration—ever gave the proportion and grace of Gothic spires and towers with the loving fidelity that Prout did. This is much to say; and therefore I say it again deliberately;—there are no existing true records of the real effect of Gothic towers and spires—except only Prout's. And now I must be tedious awhile, and explain what I mean in saying this,—being much,—and show it to be true. Observe first—everything in grace of form depends on truth of scale. You don't show how graceful a thing is, till you show how large it is; for all grace means ultimately the use of strength in the right way, moral and physical against a given force. A swan, no bigger than a butterfly, would not be graceful—its grace is in its proportion to the waves, and power over them. A butterfly as large as a swan would not be graceful—its beauty is in being so small that the winds play with it, but do not vex it. A hollow traceried spire fifteen feet high would be effeminate and frivolous, for it would be stronger solid—a hollow traceried spire five hundred feet high, is beautiful; for it is safer so, and the burden of the builder's toil spared. All wisdom—economy—beauty, and holiness, are one; harmonious throughout—in all places, times, and things: understand any one of their orders, and do it—it will lead you to another—to all others, in time.

Now, therefore, think why this spire of Evreux is graceful. If it were only silver filigree over a salt-cellar, it would still be pretty, (for it is

beautifully varied and arranged). But not 'graceful' (or full of grace). The reason is that it is built, not with silver, but with aspen logs, and because there has been brought a strange refinement and melody, as of chiming in tune, and virtue of uprightness—and precision of pointedness, into the aspen logs, which nobody could ever have believed it *was* in a log to receive. And it is graceful also, because it is evidently playful and bright in temper. There are no labouring logs visible—no propping, or thrusting, or bearing logs—no mass of enduring and afflicted timber—only imaginative timber, aspiring just high enough for praise, not for ambition. Twice as high as it ever could have stood in a tree—by honour of men done to it; but not so high as to strain its strength, and make it weak among the winds, or perilous to the people.

10. STRASBURG—THE CATHEDRAL SPIRE.

I have put this drawing—quite one of the noblest in all the series—out of its geographical place, and beside the Evreux, that you may compare the qualities of grace in wooden and stone buildings; and follow out our begun reasoning further.

Examine, first, how the height is told. Conscientiously, to begin with. He had not room enough on his paper (perhaps), and put the top at the side rather than blunt or diminish the least bit. I say 'perhaps,' because, with most people, that would have been the way of it: but my own private opinion is, that *he* never meant to have room on his paper for it—that he felt instinctively that it was grander to have it going up nobody knew where—only that he could not draw it so

for the public, and must have the top handy to put on afterwards.

Conscientiously, first, the height is told; next, artfully. He chooses his place just where you can see the principal porch at the end of the street—takes care, by every artifice of perspective and a little exaggeration of aerial tone, to make you feel how far off it is; then carries it up into the clearer air. Of course, if you don't notice the distant porch, or are not in the habit of measuring the size of one part of a thing by another, you will not feel it here—but neither would you have felt it there, at Strasburg itself.

Next, for composition. If you ever read my last year's notes on Turner, you must remember how often I had to dwell on his way of conquering any objectionable character in his main subject by putting more of the same character in something else, where it was *not* objectionable. Now it happens to be one of the chief faults of Strasburg Spire (and it has many, for all the reputation of it), to be far too much constituted of meagre upright lines (see the angle staircases, and process of their receding at the top, and the vertical shafts across the window at its base). Prout instantly felt, as he drew the tower, that, left to itself it would be too ironlike and stiff. He does not disguise this character in the least, but conquers it utterly by insisting with all his might on the flutings of the pilasters of the near well. 'How ill drawn these!' you say. Yes, but he hates these, in themselves, and does not care how badly he draws them, so only that by their ugly help he can save the Cathedral. Which they completely do: taking all the stiffness out of it, and leaving it majestic. Next—he uses contrast to

foil its beauty, as he has used repetition to mask its faults. In the Abbeville, No. 4, he had a beautiful bit of rustic white wall to set off his towers with. Here, in Strasburg, half modernised, alas! even in his time, he finds nothing better than the great ugly white house behind the lamp In old times, remember, a series of gables like that of the last house would have gone all down the street. (Compare the effect in Strasburg, No. 11, all contemporary.) Prout will not do any 'restoration'—he knows better: but he could easily have disguised this white house with cast shadows across the street, and some blinds and carpets at the windows. But the white, vulgar mass shall not be so hidden, and the richness of all the old work shall gain fulness out of the modern emptiness, and modesty out of the modern impudence.

Pre-eminently the gain is to the dear old gabled house on the right, which is the real subject of the drawing, being a true Strasburg dwelling-house of the great times. But before speaking more of this I must ask you to look at the next subject.

12. OLD STREET IN LISIEUX.

This, though it contains so much work, is a hurried and fatigued drawing—fatigued itself in a sense, as having more touches put on it than were good for it; and the sign of fatigue in the master, or perhaps rather of passing illness, for he seems never to have been tired in the ordinary way. The unusually confused and inarticulate figures, the more or less wriggled and ill-drawn draperies, and the unfinished foundation of the house on the right, where actually there is a line crossing another unintentionally! are all most singular with

him; and I fancy he must have come on this subject at the end of a sickly-minded day, and yet felt that he must do all he could for it, and then broken down.

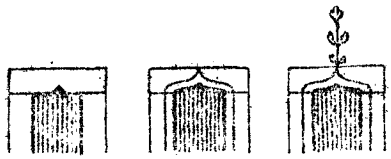
He has resolved to do it justice, at least in the drawing No. 13, one of the best in the room; but there are characters in the subject itself which, without his quite knowing why, cramped him, and kept several of his finer powers from coming into play.

Note first, essentially, he is a draughtsman of stone, not wood, and a tree-trunk is always wholly beyond his faculty; so that, when everything is wooden, as here, he has to translate his stony manner for it all through, and is as if speaking a foreign language. In the finished drawing, one scarcely knows whether the near doorway *is* stone or wood.

And there was one character, I repeat, in this subject that specially strained this weak part of him. When a wooden house is in properly wooden style—he can always do it, as at Abbeville and Strasburg. But this street at Lisieux is a wooden street in stone style. I feel even tempted to write fine scientific modern English about it, and say it is objectively lignologic and subjectively petrologic. The crossing beams of the wall-courses, and king-posts of the gables in dormer windows are indeed properly expressive of timber structure; but all the sculpture is imitative of the forms developed in the stone traceries of the same period—seen perfectly in the elaborate drawing, No. 13.

Those traceries were themselves reciprocally corrupted, as we shall see presently, by the woodwork practised all round them; but both

the Burgundian and Norman later Gothic was corrupted by its own luxurious laziness, before it took any infection from the forest. Instead of building a real pointed arch—they merely put a cross lintel with a nick in it* (*a*), then softened



a *b* *c*

the nick-edges and ran a line of moulding round it (*b*), and then ran up a flourish above to show what a clever thing they had done, (*c*),—and there you are. But there is much more curious interest in this form of wooden imitative architecture than any mere matter of structural propriety.

Please compare the Lisieux houses in No. 12, with the house on the right at Strasburg in No. 10. You see there are no pinnacles nor crockets imitated there. All is sternly square—upright timber and cross timber—cut into what ornamental current mouldings the workman knew.

And yet you see the Cathedral at the side is eminently gabled and pinnacular! Run your eye from the square window of the second story of the house (third from ground), along to the cathedral gabled tracery. Could any two styles be more adverse? While on the contrary, the Lisieux street is merely a 'changing the willow wreaths to stone,'—in imitation of the chapel of St. Jaques?

* *Without* the nick, mind you, it would have been a grand building—pure Greek or pure Tuscan, and capable of boundless good. It is the Nicolaitane nick that's the devil.

It is true, the Lisieux street is contemporary with St. Jaques, and the Strasburg house a century or so later than the Cathedral; but that is not the reason of the opposition. Had they been either pure French or pure German the two would have declined together and have died together. But in France of the fifteenth century, church, noblesse, and people, were one body, and the people in Lisieux loved and delighted in their clergy and nobles, as the Venetians did,—

'Pontifices, clerus, populus, dux mente serenus.'

But Strasbourg is on the edge—nay, on the Pole—of all divisions. Virtually, from west to east, between Dijon and Berne; virtually, from north to south, between Cologne and Basle; virtually, if you have eyes the Diet of Worms is in it; the Council of Constance is in it; the Battle of Sempach is there, and the rout of Granson.

That is a Swiss cottage, with all ecclesiastical and feudal powers flaming up into the sky at the side of it, and the iron lances and lines of them are as lace round the 'Commerce de Jean Dichl.' 'Commerce,' a grand word, which we suppose ourselves here to understand, an entirely vile one, if misunderstood. Human commerce, a business for men and angels; but inhuman, for apes and spectres. We must look at a few more street-scenes in order to find out which sort Jean Dichl's belongs to.

14. BAYEUX.

A small sketch, but first-rate, and with half a mile of street in it. Pure and plain woodwork this, with prop and buttress of stumpy stone—

healthy all, and sound ; note especially the strong look of foundation, as opposed to the modern style of house-front in most commercial quarters,—five stories of brick wall standing on the edge of a pane of plate-glass.

15. TOURS.

The saints presiding over an old-clothes shop, apparently ;—but it may be the fashionable drapers of the quarter. I merely give it as an example of the developed form of bracket, the end of the cross timber becoming a niche, and the prop, a saint—not without meaning. Much more strength than is really wanted allowed in the backing, so that these corrugated saints do not by their recessed niches really weaken the structure. Compare photograph, No. 117, on the near side of the screen.

16. ROUEN. THE BUTTER-TOWER.

Built with the octroi on butter—not a right way,—be it spoken, in passing. All taxes on food of any sort, or drink of any sort, are wrong, whether to build a pious tower, or support an impious government.

A tired sketch,—the house on the left, one of the most beautiful in France, hurried and ill done.

17. ROUEN. STAIRCASE IN ST. MACLOU.

Almost unique in the elaboration of the texture in marble pillar, and effect of distant light, showing what he was capable of in this kind : compare St. Jaques, No. 8, where he gets flickering sunlight through painted glass. There, the effect is pathetic and expressive ; but both texture and

effect of light were mistakes, in St. Maclou; it does not in the least matter to the staircase whether the pillar is smooth, or the window bright. In earlier times, he would have merely indicated the forms of both, and given his time to gather groups of figures following the circular sweep of the staircase.

18. GHENT.

Having run south now as far as I care, we will turn back, please, to go through the Netherlands into Germany. Pretty nearly *all* the Netherlands are in this and the following drawing. Boats, beside houses; the boats heavily practical; the houses heavily fanciful; but both accurate and perfect in their way; work of a great, though fen-witted, people. The Ghent scene is the very cream of Prout,—all that he could best do in his happiest times—his Cornish and Hastings boat-study standing him in thorough stead *here*, though it will fail him at Venice, as we shall sadly see.

19. ANTWERP.

Altogether magnificent: the noble street-scene, requiring no effort to exalt, no artifice to conceal a single feature in it. Pure fact,—the stately houses and the simple market, and the divine tower. You would like advertisements all along the house-fronts, instead, wouldn't you? and notices of sale—at a ruinous sacrifice—in the shop-windows, wouldn't you? and a tramway up the street, and a railway under it, and a gasometer at the end of it, instead of a cathedral—now wouldn't you?

21. BRUNSWICK.

Dainty still; a most lovely drawing. I didn't find anything so good in the town myself, but was not there until 1859, when, I suppose, all the best of it had been knocked down. The Stadthaus (see lithograph on the screen, No. 93) is unique in the support of its traceries on light transverse arches, but this innovation, like nearly all German specialities in Gothic, is grotesque, and affected without being ingenious.

22. DRESDEN.

An exquisite drawing; and most curious in the entire conquest and calming down of Prout's usual broken touch into Renaissance smoothness. It is the best existing representation of the old town, and readers of Friedrich may care to know what it was like.

23. PRAGUE.—ENTRANCE OVER THE BRIDGE.

A drawing already noticed, of the highest quality. The lithograph on the screen, No. 91, of the other side of the tower on the right, enables us to walk back the other way; it is quite one of the best drawings in the book.

24. PRAGUE.—THE STADTHAUS.

Both lovely, and essentially Proutesque, as a drawing. Architecturally, one of the prettiest possible examples of fourteenth century Gothic. The town was all, more or less, like that, once—the houses beyond have, I suppose, been built even since the siege.

25. BAMBERG.

I include this drawing in our series, first for its lovely crowd of figures; and secondly, to show that Prout never attempts to make anything picturesque that naturally isn't. Domo d'Ossola and Bologna (47 and 64) are picturesque—in the drawings, because they are so in reality—and heavy Bamberg remains as dull as it pleases to be. This strict honesty of Prout's has never been rightly understood, because he didn't often draw dull things, and gleaned the picturesque ones out of every hole and corner; so that everybody used to think it was he who had made them picturesque. But, as aforesaid, he is really as true as a mirror.

26. NUREMBERG, THE FRAUENKIRCHE.

Of the best time, and certainly the fullest expression ever given of the character of the church. But the composition puzzled him, the house corner on left coming in too abruptly, and the sketch falls short of his best qualities; he gets fatigued with the richness in excess over so large a mass, and feels that nothing of foreground will carry it out in harmony.

28. THE DRACHENFELS.

When I said that Turner and Prout stood by themselves in power of rendering magnitude, I don't mean on the same level, of course, but in perfect sympathy; and Turner himself would have looked with more than admiration—with real respect—at this quiet little study. I have never seen any other picture or drawing which gave so intensely the main truths of the breadth and prolonged distances of the great river, and the

scale and standing of the rock, as compared with the buildings, and woods at its feet.

The 'standing' of the rock, I say especially; for it is in great part by the perfect sculpture and build of its buttresses—(the 'articulation' which, I have just said, Fielding shunned as too troublesome) that the effect, or rather information, of magnitude is given.

And next to this rock drawing, the clear houses and trees, and exquisite little boat—examined well—complete the story of mountain power by their intense reality. Take the lens to them—there is no true enjoyment to be had without attention, either from pictures, or the truth itself.

29. ISLANDS ON THE RHINE.

First, the power of the Dragon rock—then of the noble river. It seems to have been an especially interesting scene this, to good painters. One of the most elaborate pieces of drawing ever executed by Turner was from this spot.

30. THE PFALZ.

Hurried a little, and too black in distance—but I include it in the series for a most interesting bit of composition in it. The building, from this point of view, had a disagreeable look of a church-tower surrounded by pepper-boxes. He brings it into a mass, and makes a fortress of it, by the shadow on the mountain to the right of the tower, almost as dark as a bit of roof.

32. WORMS.

An early drawing—the only one included in this series—is to be compared with the careful water-colour, No. 31.

33. See under No. 37.

35. ULM.

A beautiful drawing of one of the most interesting street fountains in Germany. It is given in this sketch, as usual, with entire care and feeling of its proportion. The water-colour drawing, No. 36, shows the little interest he took in copying for the Exhibition, knowing that the British mind was not to be impressed by proportion, and only cared for getting things into their frames. The lithograph on the screen, No. 90, is on the contrary, one of his most careful works, and quite true to the place, when I saw it in 1835. I suppose it is all pulled down, and made an 'esplanade' of by this time. (See *Seven Lamps*, p. 182, in Appendix I., p. 91.)

37 and 33. SWISS AND GERMAN COSTUMES.

I never can understand how these groups are ever designed,—or caught, and how they are built up, one by one. No painter who can do it ever tells us how.

39. CHILLON.

The only drawing I ever saw which gave the real relation of the castle to the size of the mountains behind it.

40. THE DUNGEON OF CHILLON.

I must leave the reader now to make what he may of this and the following drawings as far as 47:—all of them, to people who know the old look of the places, will be interesting; but I have no time to enlarge on them.

41. MONTREUX.

42. WATERFALL UNDER THE DENT DU MIDI, IN THE RHONE VALLEY.

43. VILLAGE OF MARTIGNY.

46. BRIEG.

47. DOMO D' OSSOLA.

One of the most exemplary in the room, for intense fidelity to the place, and lovely composition of living groups. Note the value of the upright figure in the balcony on the left, in breaking up and enriching the mass, and joining it with the rest.

48. COMO.

Enough dwelt on in the preface, p. 30.

49. THE MONUMENT OF CAN SIGNORIO DELLA SCALA: AT VERONA

Note that the low sarcophagus on the left, of much finer time than the richer tomb, has on its side a bas-relief representing the Madonna enthroned between two angels, a third angel presents to her the dead knight's soul, kneeling.

50. The large drawing of the subject, No. 50, has lost all these particulars. Was it all Prout's fault, shall we say. Was there anyone, in his time, of English travellers, who would have thanked him for a Madonna and a dead old Scaliger, done ever so clearly?

56. VENICE. DUCAL PALACE FROM THE WEST.

57. VENICE. DUCAL PALACE FROM THE EAST.

58. ST. MICHAEL'S MOUNT, NORMANDY.

I have put No. 58 in this eccentric manner, after the Ducal Palace, that the reader may feel, for good and all, Prout's intense appreciation of local character,—his gaiety with the gay, and his strength with the strong. Cornish-bred, his own heart is indeed in the rocks, and towers, and sands of the fraternal Norman shore,—and it fails him in Venice, where the conditions alike of her masquing and her majesty were utterly strange to him. Still, the sense of light, and motion, and splendour above the Riva dei Schiavoni; and of gloom, and iron-fastness, and poverty, midst the silent sands of Avranches, are rendered by the mirror of him, as if you had but turned its face from sun to shade.

The St. Michael's is an entirely grand drawing. The St. Raphael's—for that is indeed the other name of the Ducal Palace*—on this side, has many faults; but is yet, out and out, the best Ducal Palace that has yet been done. It is not an architectural drawing,—does not in the least pretend to be. No one had ever drawn the traceries of the Ducal Palace till I did myself. Canaletto, in his way, is just as false as Prout,—Turner no better. Not one of them painted anything but their general impressions; and not a soul in England knew that there was a system in Venetian architecture at all, until I made the measured (to half and quarter inches) elevation of it (No. 105 on

* The angel Michael is the angle statue on the south-west (seen in No. 56), with the inscription, 'With my sword I guard the good, and cleanse the evil.' The angel Raphael holds in his hands the nations' prayer to him, 'Raphael, the dreadful ('reverende'), make thou the deep quiet, we beseech thee.'

the screen), and gave the analysis of its tracery mouldings and their development, from those of the Franciscans at the Frari (*Stones of Venice*, vol. ii.). This study of Prout's, then, I repeat, does not pretend to architectural accuracy; and it has even one very considerable fault. Prout's mind had been so formed among buildings solid at the base, and aerial at the top, that he not only could not enjoy, he could not even *see*, the national audacity of the great builder of the Ducal Palace, in supporting its wall on, virtually, two rows of marble piles; and, at the further end, just where the shafts at the angle let the winds blow through them as frankly as the timbers of Calais pier,* he blackens them all up inside, as if the backing wall were solid and the arches were only niches.

For all that, there never was anything so true

* The real and marvellous structure of the angle is admirably shown in the photograph on the screen, No. 196*a*, though the quantity of light penetrating the shafts is a little exaggerated in effect by uniting with the light sides of the shafts. Taking the lens to the photograph, you will see this line is destroyed by the modern gas-lamp stuck across the Italian sculpture, and you may admire at leisure the other improvements made by the art of the nineteenth century on the effect of the piazzetta. The combination of the fore and mizen masts of the huge steamer whose hull, with its boat, blocks out the whole lagoon; and of the upright *near* gas-lamp, with the pillar of St. Mark:—the introduction of the steamer's painted funnel to form a foundation for the tower of San Giorgio—the bathing establishment anchored beyond the pillars, just where the Bucentaur used to lie close to the quay to receive the Doge; and, finally, the bills pasted on the sheds at the base of St. Mark's column, advising us of improving works of a liberal tone, such as the 'Storia della Natura,' and the 'Misteri della Inquisizione di Spagna.' In this same Loggia of Sansovino's, against which these sheds are built, the 'Misteri' of the Government Lottery are also revealed weekly to the popular mind.

to the general splendour and life of the palace done before, nor ever will be again.*

And in the great drawing (No. 60), lent by Lord Coleridge, the upper story is singularly and gracefully accurate in the pinnacled Gothic of its central window, and in the various elevations and magnitudes of the rest. The two upper windows in the shade at the nearest angle are the oldest portions of the Palace visible, and Prout has carefully noted their different curve. The bright and busy figures are true to old times only.

There are two points—technical both and spiritual both—which the reader must note in this drawing.

The first, how thankful Prout is for the clusters of doves along the upper line of the cornice. 'They might as well be jackdaws,' you think? Well, as aforesaid, Prout is not a colourist, else he would have made his boats black and his doves grey; but then he would have been Carpaccio, and not Prout. This is really all you can expect him to do for a dove, with his poor Cumberland plumbago;—and, after all, the glory of the creatures is not in being pigeons, but in being Venetians. Swallow or sparrow, daw or dove, sea-gull by Achilles' isle or chough by Cornish cliff,—that they are living with us by shore and altar, under cottage eaves and around palace council chambers, that is their glory,—and, if we knew it, our peace.

The other point is more definitely technical, yet has its lesson in other directions also. I have already again and again insisted on Prout's way of taking up his stitches, and carrying one part of

* For the building is now being restored, and no man with a heart will ever draw the patched skeleton of it more.

his work into another. Look back to what is said of the Como in preface. He is no more content with his Ducal Palace till he has got it well into fugue with its crowd than he was with these old houses by the harbour. He won't break the corner of its arcade, but just flutes, as it were, a single pillar with the mast of a boat, and then carries the mast down—stopping the arch-mouldings for it, observe, as he draws them, so deliberate is he, and, getting well down so to his figures, rivets the rent of the canal across with the standing one, just under Michael Steno's central window, and then carries all away to the right, with the sitting figures and levelled sails in harmony with the courses of the palace, and to the left, with the boats. Hide one of these foundational forms with your hand, and see how the palace goes to pieces! There are many compositions in the room more felicitous; but there is no other in which the opposite influence to the 'little rift within the lute'—the stitch in time that saves nine—is so delicately and so intensely illustrated as by the service of this single boat-spar to every shaft of the whole Ducal palace.

With respect to these Venice drawings there are two metaphysical problems—in my own mind, of extreme insolubility—and on which I therefore do not enlarge, namely, why Prout, practical among all manner of Cornish and Kentish boats, could not for the life of him draw a gondola; and the second, why, not being able to draw a gondola, he yet never gave the grand Adriatic fishing-boat, with its coloured sail, instead. These, and other relative questions still more abstruse—as, for instance, why he could draw the domes of Dresden rightly, and yet made the Madonna della Salute

look like the National Gallery or Bethlehem Hospital—I must for the present leave for the reader's own debate, and only at speed give some account of the points to be illustrated by the supplementary drawings.

People often ask me—and people who have been long at Venice too—of the subject No. 55, *where* those square pillars are, and what they are. The corner of the Piazzetta from which this view is taken was once the sweetest of all sacred niches in that great marble withdrawing-room of the Piazzetta of St. Mark's. My old sketch, No. 107, shows approximately the colour of the marble walls and pavement of it, and the way the white flowers of the Greek pillars—purest Byzantine—shone through the dark spots of lichen. The Daguerreotype, No. 114, taken under my own direction, gives the light and shade of them, chosen just where the western sunlight catches the edge of the cross at the base of the nearer one; and my study, No. 108, shows more fully the character of the Byzantine chiselling—entirely freehand, flinging the marble acanthus-leaves here and there as they would actually grow. It is *through* work of this kind that the divine Greek power of the days of Hesiod came down to animate the mosaic workers in St. Mark's in the eleventh century.

They worked under a Greek princess, of whom

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* My readers continually complain that they can't get my presently issuing books. There is not a bookseller in London, however, who is not perfectly well aware that the said books are always to be had by a post-card sent to my publisher, Mr. G. Allen, Sunnyside, Orpington, Kent, to whom subscriptions for the object stated in the text are to be sent, (or the books may be had of The Fine Art Society).

the reader will find some legend (though yet I have not been able to do more than begin her story) in the second number of *St. Mark's Rest.** In the third I have given some account of the entire series of mosaics which were completed by her husband under the influence of his Greek queen (true *queen*, mind you, at that time, the Duke of Venice then wearing the king's diadem, not the republican cap); and I besought my readers at Venice and elsewhere to help me to get some faithful record of these mosaics before they perished by modern restoration. I have never made a more earnest appeal for anything—and indeed I believe, had it been for a personal gift —another Splugen drawing, or the like—I should have got it by this time easily enough. But there are always twenty people who will do what they feel to be kind, for one who will take my advice about an important public object. And —if they only knew it—the one real kindness they *can* show to me is in listening to me,—understanding, in the first place, that I know my business better at sixty than I did at five-and-twenty; and in the second, that my happiness, such as yet remains to me, does not at all consist in the things about me in my own parlour, but in the thought that the principles I have taught are being acted upon, and the great buildings and great scenes I have tried to describe saved, so far as may yet be possible, from destruction and desecration. At this very hour, the committees of Venetian builders are meeting to plot the total destruction, and re-erection according to their own notions, and for their own emolument, of the entire west front of St. Mark's—that which Barbarossa knelt under, and before which Dandolo

took his vow for Palestine! And, in the meantime the Christian populace of all Europe is quarrelling about their little parish reredoses and wax-candle.

And so it comes to pass, that the floor of St. Mark's is already destroyed, together with the north and south sides; only the west front and roof mosaics are yet left, and these are instantly threatened. I have got an absolutely faithful and able artist, trained by Mr. Burne Jones, to undertake the copying of the whole series of mosaics yet uninjured. He is doing this for love and mere journeyman's wages—how carefully and thoroughly the three examples in this room (114, 115, 116) will enough show; but he has been six months at work alone, unable to employ assistants, and all that I have yet got for him by the eagerest appeals I could make at Venice and here is—some hundred and thirty pounds, and half of that from a single personal friend! †

I will have a little circular drawn up, stating these and other relative facts clearly, before the close of the present exhibition. Before its opening, I can allow myself now little more than the mere explanation of what it contains.

And now I really haven't time to talk any

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* It may perhaps not be quite too late to contradict a report that appeared in some Irish paper, that I had been lately in Dublin, giving some opinion or other about reredoses. I have not been in Ireland these ten years—never shall be in Ireland more—and care no more about any modern churches or church furniture than about the drop-scene at Drury Lane—not so much indeed, if the truth were all told.

† 128*l.* 15*s.* 6*d.*, by report from Mr. Allen, of 12th November.

more, and yet I've ever so much to say, if I could, of the following drawings at Arqua and Nuremberg, 77 and 70. I must at least say at once why these, like Venice and St. Michael's Mount, go side by side.

In the first place, I believe that the so-called Petrarch's house at Arqua (67) can only be built on the site of the real one—it can't be of Petrarch's time; but the tomb is true, and just looking from that, to the building of Dürer's house (70)—which is assuredly authentic—and of Rubens's, No. 81, what a quantity of the lives of the men we are told by these three slight sketches! One of the things I hope to do at Sheffield is to get a connected and systematic series of drawings of the houses and the tombs of great men. The tombs, of course, generally tell more of their successors than of themselves; but the two together will be historical more than many volumes. Their houses, I say; yes, and the things they saw from their houses—quite the chief point with many of the best men and women. Casa Guidi windows, often of much more import than Casa Guidi; and in this house of Albert', its own cross-timbers are little matter, but those Nuremberg walls around it are everything.

73. KELSO

I now gather together as I best may, the supplementary drawings which have come in since I arranged my series, and one or two others which did not properly belong to it. This one of Kelso is chiefly valuable as showing his mode of elementary study with washes of two tints—one warm, the other a little cooler. The system was afterwards expanded into his colour practice.

74. ENTRANCE TO NORTH TRANSEPT OF ROUEN.

Unfinished, and extremely interesting, as showing his *method* of rubbing in the tint with the stump or his finger, before adding the pencil lines.

75. STUDY OF DUTCH BOATS.

These boat sketches might be multiplied countlessly—and I would fain have given many and talked much of them, but have neither room nor time. Note in this the careful warping of the mast by the strain of the heavy sail.

76. NEUNERSDORF.
77. GUTENFELS.

Two lovely Rhine realities; when the river was something better than a steam-tramway.

78. AN OLD RHINE BRIDGE, AT RHEINFELDEN.

A favourite Turner subject, and drawn and engraved with great care in *Modern Painters*. As a Prout, it is inferior—small in manner and forced, but as usual, wholly true to the place.

79. MUNICH.

Notable chiefly for the effort made to draw the attention away from the ugly arcade under the houses by the crowd of near figures. Compare the insistance on beautiful arcades in the Como and Domo d'Ossola.

80. YPRES.

Wholly lovely, and to be classed with the Abbeville and Evreux as one of the most precious records of former domestic architecture.

81. RUBENS' HOUSE, ANTWERP.

The kind of domestic architecture that destroyed all reverence for what preceded it, and brought us down to—what we are.

Note the beginning of modern anatomies and sciences and pseudo classicalisms in the monstrous skulls of beasts.

82. CAEN.

83. FALAISE.

Two of the most careful and finished pieces of his later work, but rather architectural studies than pictures, and alas! the architecture of the worst school. So little can the taste be really formed without study of sculpture as the queen of edifying law. See notes on Supplementary Sketches.

86. PORTICO DI OTTAVIA, ROME.

All the life and death of Rome is in this quite invaluable drawing: but I have no time to talk of the life and death of Rome, and perhaps the enlightened modern student would only care for a view of the new tobacco manufactory under the Palatine.

87. WELL AT STRASBURG.

We don't want wells neither, in these days of wisdom, having Thirlmere turned on for us, or Loch Katrine, at our pleasure. But—from the days of Jacob's well till—thirty years ago, such things were pleasant in human eyes.

88. WELL AT STRASBURG.

I close our Prout pencilling with seven examples of his superb work on stone; all by his own hand, and as literally and thoroughly his, touch for touch, as the pencil sketches themselves, and even more wonderful in their easy mastery of the more difficult material.

What a disgrace it is to modern landscape painters that this book of Prout's, '*Sketches in Flanders and Germany*,' should remain, to this day, the *only work* of true artistic value produced, that is to say, by the artist's own hand, purchaseable by the public of Europe, in illustration of their national architecture!

89. WELL AT NUREMBERG.

This study is one of the most beautiful, but also, one of the most imaginative that ever Prout made—highly exceptional and curious.

The speciality of Nuremberg is, that its walls are of stone, but its windows—especially those in the roof, for craning up merchandise—are of wood. All the projecting windows and all the dormers, in this square are of wood. But Prout could not stand the inconsistency and deliberately petrifies all the wood. Very naughty of him! I have nothing to say in extenuation of this offence; and, alas! secondly, the houses have, in reality, only three stories, and he has put a fourth on, out of his inner consciousness!

I never knew him do such a thing before or since; but the end of it is, that this drawing of Nuremberg is immensely more Nurembergy than the town itself, and a quite glorious piece of mediæval character.

90. ULM

91. PRAGUE.—TOWER OF THE GATE.

92. PRAGUE.—STADTHAUS.—The realisation of sketch No.

93. BRUNSWICK.—RATHHAUS

94. COBLENTZ.

I have always held this lithograph to show all Prout's qualities in supreme perfection, and proudly finish our series of pencil and chalk work with it.

We now come to a large series of early colour studies, promising better things than ever came of them; and then the examples of Prout, for which we are simply to blame the public taste he had to meet, and not him. There were no pre-Raphaelites in those days. On the walls at the Scala Palace, in that sketch of Verona, No. 49, Prout has written, conscientiously, 'brick;' but do you think if he had painted it of brick, anybody would have bought the drawing? Since those days, all the work of Walker, of Boyce, of Alfred Hunt, of Albert Goodwin, of John Brett (the whole school of them, mind you, founded first on the strong Pre-Raphalite veracities which were all but shrieked down at the first seeing of them, and which I had to stand up alone for, against a whole national clamour of critical vituperation), all that affectionate and laborious painting from nature has familiarised you, now, with birds, and ivy, and blossoms, and berries, and mosses, and rushes, and ripples, and trickles, and wrinkles, and twinkles; and, of course, poor

old Prout's conventional blue wash won't look its best afterwards. Be thankful to *them*, (and somewhat also—I say it not in pride, but as a part of the facts—to *Modern Painters* and me) and indulgent to the old workman, who did the best he could for his customers, and the most he could for his money.

95. THE ENGLISH COTTAGE.—See preface.

96. LAUNCESTON.

Had this drawing been brought to me as an early Turner, I should have looked twice, and thrice, at it before saying no. If Prout had only had just ever so little more pride, and some interest in British history, he would have been a painter, indeed! and no mean pencil draughtsman. But he just missed it—and a miss is as bad as a mile, or a million of miles; and I say nothing more of the series of water-colours here, except only that many a good lesson may be learned from them in chiaroscuro, and in flat tinting, by modest students.

SUPPLEMENTARY DRAWINGS

ON THE SCREEN.

There are—or ought to be, if I get them together in time—eleven of my own, namely:—

104. CALAIS.

104*a*. THE AVENTINE.

105. DUCAL PALACE AND BRIDGE OF SIGHS.

106. DUCAL PALACE, FOLIAGE OF SOUTH-WEST ANGLE.

107. PILLAR OF THE PIAZZETTA.

108. PHOTOGRAPH OF THE PILLAR OF THE PIAZZETTA.

108*a*. CHIAROSCURO STUDY OF THE SAME PILLAR.

109. THE CASA D'ORO. (*On the south wall.*)

110. WINDOW ON THE GRAND CANAL.

111. ABBEVILLE CROCKET.

112. OAK-LEAF.

113. MOSS AND OXALIS.

I meant when first this exhibition was planned, to have made it completely illustrative of the

French flamboyant architecture, which Prout had chiefly studied; but I have been too much interrupted by other duties; and I can only now point out, once more,—after thirty years of reiterating this vital fact to architects in vain,—that until they are themselves absolute masters of sculptural surface, founded on natural forms, they do not know the meaning of any good work, in any school.

Sculptural *surface*, observe:—they fancy they have drawn an ornament when they have got its outline; but in sculpture the *surface* is everything; the outline follows, and is compelled by it. Thus, in the piece of Ducal Palace sculpture, No. 106, the entire value of it depends on the chiaroscuro of its surfaces; and it would be as absurd to think of sketching it without shade, as a piece of rippled lagoon. And in every minutest finial and crocket of that French flamboyant, the surfaces are studied to a perfection, not less subtle, though relieved by more violent shade. The fast study, No. 111, shows the action of the curved stems and flow of surfaces in one of the crockets of Abbeville. See photograph, No. 6, and the study of oak-leaves, No. 112, will show how the natural forms of vegetation lend themselves to every need of such attentive design. I have painted this bit of leafage in two stages, showing—if anyone cares to know it—the way Hunt used his body colour; laying it first with extreme care in form and gradation, but in pure white; and then glazing over it,—never disturbing it, or mixing it in the slightest degree with his clear colour. And it is only by this management of opaque colour that architectural detail can be drawn at speed, with any useful result. See the bit of honeysuckle orna-

ment, for instance, (you must take the lens both to the oak-leaf drawing and this,) at the top of the pillar in No. 108, and fancy the time it would have taken to express the bossy roundness of it in any other way. All disputes about the use of body colour, begin and end in the 'to be or not to be' of accurate form.

Then there are three drawings of St. Mark's mosaics by Mr. Rooke:

114. FLORAL DECORATION.

115. MADONNA AND DAVID.

116. THE PROPHETS.

Then some variously illustrative photographs, &c., namely:—

117. ABBEVILLE

118. PICTURE OF ABBEVILLE.

106*a*. VENICE, THE PIAZZETTA.

11. LITHOGRAPH OF MODERN STRASBURG. (*On the east wall.*)

119 (?) IMPROVEMENTS IN MODERN LONDON.

Then in the glass case, there is a little bit of real Venetian sixteenth century silk-work—put there to show precisely what Shakespeare meant by 'Valance of Venice gold in needlework,' (*Taming of the Shrew*), and secondly, to show the use of minute points of colour in decoration carried on thus far from the Byzantine schools; and finally, there is the Meissonier, above referred to, Napoleon, in 1814, on the Chaussée of Vitry, just after the battle of Arcis-sur-Aube.

'The French horsemen, though inferior to none in the world for audacity and prowess, were overmatched by their opponents and driven back to the bridge of Arcis. Napoleon, who was on the other side, instantly rode forward to the entrance of the bridge, already all but choked up with fugitives, and drawing his sword, exclaimed, "Let me see which of you will pass before me!" These words arrested the flight, and the division Friant traversing the streets of Arcis in double-quick time passed the bridge, formed on either side of its other extremity, and by their heavy fire drove back the allied horse.

'Napoleon was repeatedly in imminent danger, nearly all his staff were killed or wounded. "Fear nothing," said he, to the generals who urged him to retire: "the bullet is not yet cast which is to kill me." He seemed to court rather than fear death, his air was resolute but sombre, and as long as the battle raged, by the light of the burning houses behind and the flash of the enemies' guns in front, he continued to face the hostile batteries.

'On leaving Arcis, instead of taking the road to Chalons or to Paris, he moved on the chaussée of Vitry, direct towards the Rhine. His letter to the Empress Marie Louise was in these terms:—

'"My love, I have been for some days constantly on horseback; on the 20th I took Arcis-sur-Aube. The enemy attacked me there at eight in the evening. I beat him the same evening, I took two guns and retook two. The next day the enemy's army put itself in array to protect the march of its columns on Bar-sur-Aube, and I resolved to approach the Marne and its environs.

This evening I shall be at St. Dizier. Farewell, my love. Embrace my son." (See *Alison*, vol. x., pp. 396 to 406).

It would be difficult to find a more perfect example of the French realistic school than this picture. It is, of course, conventional, and founded on photographic effect—the white horse in reality would have looked like a ghost in the twilight, and not one of the details of the housings, been in the least visible—had these been so, much more should the details of the landscape have been. But in its kind it is without rivalship, and I purpose that it shall remain in St. George's schools—for a monument of War-sorrow, where War has been unjust.

II.—HUNT.

142.

THE BUTTERFLY.

Before saying anything more of the Hunt series, I want my readers once more clearly to understand what I have brought it here for; namely, to show them what real painting is, as such, wholly without inquiry concerning its sentiment or story. The Prouts are here for an exactly opposite reason—not at all to show you what mere pencilling is, as such—but what it can pencil for us of European scenery and history. Whereas this butterfly is here, not at all to teach you anything you didn't know about butterflies; nor the peach and grapes to teach you anything you didn't know about those familiar fruits; nor even that boy in his father's boots to teach you anything you didn't know before about boys and boots. They are here merely to show you what is meant by Painting, as distinguished from daubing, from plastering, from rough casting, from chromo-tinting, from tray-varnishing, from paper-staining, and in general from the sort of things that people in general do when you put a brush into their hands, and a pot within reach of them.

Now that little brown-red butterfly (which Mr. Gurney is so fortunate in possessing) is a piece of

real painting; and it is as good as Titian or anybody else ever did. And if you can enjoy it you can enjoy Titian and all other good painters; and if you can't see anything in *it*, you can't see anything in *them*, and it is all affectation and pretence to say that you care about them.

And with this butterfly, in the drawing I put first, please look at the mug and loaf in the one I have put last, of the Hunt series, No. 171. The whole art of painting is in that mug—as the fisherman's genius was in the bottle. If you can feel how beautiful it is, how etherial, how heathery and heavenly, as well as to the uttermost, muggy: you have an eye for colour, and can enjoy heather, heaven, and everything else below and above. If not you must enjoy what you can, contentedly, but it won't be painting; and in mugs, it will be more the beer than the crockery; and on the moors, rather grouse than heather.

Going back to No. 142, you will perhaps ask me why the poppy is so poor and the butterfly so rich? Mainly because the poppy withered and the butterfly was pinned and permanent. But there are other reasons, of which more presently.

144. HERRING AND PILCHARD.

Supreme painting again, and done with his best pains; for these two subjects, and

146. DEAD CHICKEN

Were done by the old man, in all kindness and care, at my own request, for me to give as types of work to country schools of Art. Yet no kindness or care could altogether enable him to work rightly under the direction of another mind; and the pro-

ject was ultimtely given up by me, the chicken, finished as it is, having been one of my chief disappointments. And here anent, let me enter into some general account of the tenor of his drawings. They may be broadly divided into the following classes, into one or other of which every work of importance from his hand will distinctly fall.

Class 1.

Drawings illustrative of rural life in its vivacity and purity, without the slightest endeavour at idealisation, and still less with any wish either to caricature, or deplore, its imperfections. All the drawings belonging to this class are, virtually, faultless, and most of them very beautiful. It is, I am glad to say, thoroughly represented in this room, which contains several examples of the highest quality, namely, 121, 168, 171, 172, 173, 175.

Besides two pieces of still life, (169, and the interior, No. 174), properly belonging to the group

Class 2.

Country life, with endeavour to add interest to it by passing sentiment.

The drawings belonging to this class are almost always over-finished, and liable to many faults. There are three in this collection—120, 165, 166.

Class 3.

Country life, with some expression of its degradation, either by gluttony, cowardice, or rudeness.

The drawings of this class are usually very clever and apt to be very popular; but they are on the

whole dishonourable to the artist. There are five examples here, namely, 157, 158, 161, 163, 164.

CLASS 4.

Flower-pieces. Fruit is often included in these; but they form a quite separate class, being necessarily less finished drawings—the flowers sooner changing their form. Including the fungi among these, there are eight fine ones in the room, 148, 150, 149, 154, 152, 147, 151, 154, 156.

CLASS 5.

Fruit-pieces, on which a great part of the artist's reputation very securely rests. Five first-rate ones are here, and several of interesting, though inferior, quality.

CLASS 6.

Dead animals. Alas! if he could but have painted living ones, instead of those perpetual bunches of grapes. But it could not be. To a weakly, sensitive, nervous temperament, the perpetual changes of position, and perpetual suggestion of new beauty in an animal, are entirely ruinous: in ten minutes they put one in a fever. Only the very greatest portrait-painters—Sir Joshua and Velasquez—can draw animals rightly.

I begin with this last class and re-ascend to the highest.

138. DEAD HARE AND GAME.

A most notable drawing of early practice, quite wonderful in textures of fur and in work of shadows, but tentative, and in many points failing.

141. DEAD DOVE. (A.)

A pure water-colour drawing, before his style was perfectly formed. Full of interest, but too conventional and slight in back-ground.

139. DEAD DOVE. (B.)

Finished work of central time.

145. DEAD DOVE. (C.)

Replica, I suppose, of B, with completer back-ground, and of highest quality. I must be pardoned for saying so of my own drawing; but of course, after long and affectionate relations with the painter, it would be strange if I had not some of his best works.

143. PINE, MELON, AND GRAPES.

We were obliged to put this drawing low down, for, in spite of its dark background, it killed everything we put near it. To my mind, it is the most majestic piece of work in the room. The grapes are the vintage of Rubens, and the shadows are the darkness of Tintoret. It is wholly free from any pettiness of manner, and in force, spring, and succulence of foliage it is as if the strength of nature were in it, rather than of human hand. I never saw it until now, and have learned from it more than after my fifty years of labour I thought anything but a Venetian picture could have taught me.

132. 'LOVE WHAT YOU STUDY, STUDY WHAT YOU LOVE.'

All modern painters in a nutshell of a sentence, and the painted nutshell perfect.—See Preface.

130. GRAPES.
Consummate. Can't be better anywhere.

131. MR. SIBETH'S QUINCES.
All that's best in this kind.

125. BULLACES.
Very fine, but conventional in back-ground.

129. GRAPES.
Perfect work, but wasted. Why he did so many grapes, and scarcely ever sloes, or finely russet apples, or *growing* strawberries, always mystified me.

126. PLUMS.
Finest work, but a little dull. My own favourites of his plums were such variegated ones as 133 and 135; but I somehow never got any. This drawing, however, was the one of which Hunt said to me innocently—seeing it again after some ten years—'It's very nice; isn't it?'

128. PLUMS.
The bit of oak-leaf here is very wonderful, and interesting as an example, and what Hunt meant by saying to me once, 'I like to see things "Fudged" out.' It is to be remembered, however, that this was his own special liking; and it must not be followed by the general student. The finest forms of anything cannot be 'fudged' out, but must be drawn, if possible, with the first line, at least with the last one, for ever.

149. DR. DRAGE'S FUNGI.
A perfect gem; 'Venetian red' in its best earthly splendour; it could only be more bright in clouds.

147. MR. FRY'S HAWTHORN.

A little overworked, but very glorious. Soft and scented, I think, if you only wait a little, and make-believe very much.

155. (Mine.) HAWTHORN AND BIRDS' NESTS.

The hawthorn this time a little *under*worked, but very good: and nests as good as can be.

148. LILAC. (Mr. SIBETH'S.)

Fine, but curiously redundant. The upper branch by itself, or the lower with only the laburnum, or both together without the third, would have been beautiful; but two's company, and three's none.

150. VASE WITH ROSE AND BASKET WITH FRUIT.

151. FLOWERS AND FRUIT.

Two resplendent ones; everything that he could do best in this kind—absolutely right in colour, absolutely in light and shade, and without any rivalship in past or present art.

162. THE GAMEKEEPER.

Early study. Please observe that Hunt learned his business, not in spots but in lines. Compare the entirely magnificent sketch of the river-side, No. 124, which is as powerful in lines as Rembrandt, and the St. Martin's Church, No. 123, which is like a bit of Hogarth.

157. THE INVALID.

Full of humour; but there is no place for humour in true painting. So also No. 164, The Young Artist, and the Wasp, No. 163. If I could have the currant-pie without the boy, I should be content.

161. GIPSIES.

Very powerful; historic in its kind.

166. PRAYING BOY. (MR. QUILTER'S.)

Over-finished, as its companion, No. 165, an endeavour at doing what he did not understand. So also the large study of himself, No. 176, with the Mulatto, No. 122, and Wanderer, No. 120. His mode of work was entirely unfitted for full life-size.

121. MR. QUILTER'S STABLE-BOY.

172. MR. ORROCK'S SHY SITTER, AND THE BLESSING (171).

On the contrary, he is here again in his utmost strength—and in qualities of essential painting—unconquerable. In the pure faculty of painter's art—in what Correggio, and Tintoret, and Velasquez, and Rubens, and Rembrandt, meant by *painting*—that single bunch of old horse-collars is worth all Meissonier's horse-bridles—boots, breeches, epaulettes and stars, together.

The other drawings of the highest class need no commentary. There is not much in the two little candle-lights, Nos. 168, 175, but all that is, of the finest, and the three drawings with which I close our series, 'The Shy Sitter,' No. 172, 'The Fisherman's Boy,' No. 173, and 'The Blessing,' No. 171, things that the old painter was himself unspeakably blessed in having power to do. The strength of all lovely human life is in them; and England herself lives only, at this hour, in so much as, from all that is sunk in the luxury—sick in the penury—and polluted in the sin of her great cities, Heaven has yet hidden for her, old men and children such as these, by their fifties in her fields and on her shores, and fed them with Bread and Water.

APPENDIX I.

EVERY human action gains in honour, in grace, in all true magnificence, by its regard to things that are to come. It is the far sight, the quiet and confident patience, that, above all other attributes, separate man from man, and near him to his Maker; and there is no action nor art, whose majesty we may not measure by this test. Therefore, when we build, let us think that we build for ever. Let it not be for present delight, nor for present use alone; let it be such work as our descendants will thank us for, and let us think, as we lay stone on stone, that a time is to come when those stones will be held sacred because our hands have touched them, and that men will say as they look upon the labour and wrought substance of them, 'See! this our fathers did for us.' For, indeed, the greatest glory of a building is not in its stones, nor in its gold. Its glory is in its Age, and in that deep sense of voicefulness, of stern watching, of mysterious sympathy, nay, even of approval or condemnation, which we feel in walls that have long been washed by the passing waves of humanity. It is in their lasting witness against men, in their quiet contrast with the transitional character of all things, in the strength which, through the lapse of seasons and times, and the decline and birth of dynasties, and the changing of the face of the earth, and of the limits of the sea, maintains its sculptured shapeliness for a time insuperable, connects forgotten and following ages with each other, and half constitutes the identity, as it concentrates the sympathy, of nations; it is in that golden stain of time, that we are to look for the real light, and colour, and preciousness of architecture; and it is not until a building has assumed this character, till it has been intrusted with the fame, and hallowed by the deeds of men, till its walls have been witnesses of suffering, and its pillars rise

out of the shadows of death, that its existence, more lasting as it is than that of the natural objects of the world around it, can be gifted with even so much as these possess, of language and of life.—*The Seven Lamps of Architecture*, pp. 171, 172.

But so far as it can be rendered consistent with the inherent character, the picturesque or extraneous sublimity of architecture has just this of nobler function in it than that of any other object whatsoever, that it is an exponent of age, of that in which, as has been said, the greatest glory of the building consists; and, therefore, the external signs of this glory, having power and purpose greater than any belonging to their mere sensible beauty, may be considered as taking rank among pure and essential characters; so essential to my mind, that I think a building cannot be considered as in its prime until four or five centuries have passed over it; and that the entire choice and arrangement of its details should have reference to their appearance after that period, so that none should be admitted which would suffer material injury either by the weather-staining, or the mechanical degradation which the lapse of such a period would necessitate.

It is not my purpose to enter into any of the questions which the application of this principle involves. They are of too great interest and complexity to be even touched upon within my present limits, but this is broadly to be noticed, that those styles of architecture which are picturesque in the sense above explained with respect to sculpture, that is to say, whose decoration depends on the arrangement of points of shade rather than on purity of outline, do not suffer, but commonly gain in richness of effect when their details are partly worn away; hence such styles, pre-eminently that of French Gothic, should always be adopted when the materials to be employed are liable to degradation, as brick, sandstone, or soft limestone; and styles in any degree dependent on purity of line, as the Italian Gothic, must be practised altogether in hard and undecomposing materials, granite, serpentine, or crystalline marbles. There can be no doubt that the nature of the accessible materials influenced the formation of both styles; and it should still more authoritatively determine our choice of either.—*Ibid.* pp. 178, 179.

APPENDIX II.

The essence of picturesque character has been already defined to be a sublimity not inherent in the nature of the thing, but caused by something external to it; as the ruggedness of a cottage roof possesses something of a mountain aspect, not belonging to the cottage as such. And this sublimity may be either in mere external ruggedness, and other visible character, or it may lie deeper, in an expression of sorrow and old age, attributes which are both sublime; not a dominant expression, but one mingled with such familiar and common characters as prevent the object from becoming perfectly pathetic in its sorrow, or perfectly venerable in its age.

For instance, I cannot find words to express the intense pleasure I have always in first finding myself, after some prolonged stay in England, at the foot of the old tower of Calais church. The large neglect, the noble unsightliness of it; the record of its years written so visibly, yet without sign of weakness or decay; its stern wasteness and gloom, eaten away by the Channel winds, and overgrown with the bitter sea grasses; its slates and tiles all shaken and rent, and yet not falling; its desert of brickwork, full of bolts, and holes, and ugly fissures, and yet strong, like a bare brown rock; its carelessness of what any one thinks or feels about it, putting forth no claim, having no beauty nor desirableness, pride, nor grace; yet neither asking for pity; not, as ruins are, useless and piteous, feebly or fondly garrulous of better days; but useful still, going through its own daily work,—as some old fisherman beaten grey by storm, yet drawing his daily nets: so it stands, with no complaint about its past youth, in blanched and meagre massiveness and serviceableness, gathering human souls together underneath it; the sound of its bells for prayer still rolling through its rents; and the grey peak of it seen far across the sea, principal of the three that rise above the waste of surfy sand and hillocked shore,—the

lighthouse for life, and the belfry for labour, and this for patience and praise.

I cannot tell the half of the strange pleasures and thoughts that come about me at the sight of that old tower; for, in some sort, it is the epitome of all that makes the Continent of Europe interesting, as opposed to new countries; and, above all, it completely expresses that agedness in the midst of active life which binds the old and the new into harmony. We, in England, have our new street, our new inn, our green shaven lawn, and our piece of ruin emergent from it,—a mere *specimen* of the middle ages put on a bit of velvet carpet to be shown, which, but for its size, might as well be on a museum shelf at once, under cover. But, on the Continent, the links are unbroken between the past and present, and in such use as they can serve for, the grey-headed wrecks are suffered to stay with men; while, in unbroken line, the generations of spared buildings are seen succeeding each in its place. And thus in its largeness, in its permitted evidence of slow decline, in its poverty, in its absence of all pretence, of all show and care for outside aspect, that Calais tower has an infinite of symbolism in it, all the more striking because usually seen in contrast with English scenes expressive of feelings the exact reverse of these.—*Modern Painters*, vol. iv. pp. 2, 3.

APPENDIX III.

And, in some sort, the hunter of the picturesque is better than many other pleasure-seekers; inasmuch as he is simple-minded and capable of unostentatious and economical delights, which, if not very helpful to other people, are at all events utterly uninjurious, even to the victims or subjects of his picturesque fancies; while to many others his work is entertaining and useful. And, more than all this, even that delight which he *seems* to take in misery is not altogether unvirtuous. Through all his enjoyment there runs a certain undercurrent of tragical passion,—a real vein of human sympathy;—it lies

at the root of all those strange morbid hauntings of his; a sad excitement, such as other people feel at a tragedy, only less in degree, just enough, indeed, to give a deeper tone to his pleasure, and to make him choose for his subject the broken stones of a cottage wall rather than of a roadside bank, the picturesque beauty of form in each being supposed precisely the same: and, together with this slight tragical feeling, there is also a humble and romantic sympathy, a vague desire, in his own mind, to live in cottages rather than in palaces; a joy in humble things, a contentment and delight in make-shifts, a secret persuasion (in many respects a true one) that there is in these ruined cottages a happiness often quite as great as in kings' palaces, and a virtue and nearness to God infinitely greater and holier than can commonly be found in any other kind of place; so that the misery in which he exults is not, as he sees it, misery, but nobleness,—'poor and sick in body, and beloved by the Gods.' And thus, being nowise sure that these things can be mended at all, and very sure that he knows not how to mend them, and also that the strange pleasure he feels in them *must* have some good reason in the nature of things, he yields to his destiny, enjoys his dark canal without scruple, and mourns over every improvement in the town, and every movement made by its sanitary commissioners, as a miser would over a planned robbery of his chest; in all this being not only innocent, but even respectable and admirable, compared with the kind of person who has *no* pleasure in sights of this kind, but only in fair façades, trim gardens, and park palings, and who would thrust all poverty and misery out of his way, collecting it into back alleys, or sweeping it finally out of the world, so that the street might give wider play for his chariot-wheels, and the breeze less offence to his nobility.—*Modern Painters*, vol. iv. pp. 11, 12.

APPENDIX IV.

I do not doubt that you are greatly startled at my saying that greater pleasure is to be received from inferior Art than from the finest. But what do you suppose makes all men look back to the time of childhood with so much regret, (if their childhood has been, in any moderate degree, healthy or peaceful)? That rich charm, which the least possession had for us, was in consequence of the poorness of our treasures. That miraculous aspect of the nature around us was because we had seen little and knew less. Every increased possession loads us with new weariness; every piece of new knowledge diminishes the faculty of admiration; and Death is at last appointed to take us from a scene in which, if we were to stay longer, no gift could satisfy us, and no miracle surprise.

In your educational series is a lithograph drawing, by Prout, of an old house in Strasbourg. The carvings of its woodwork are in a style altogether provincial, yet of which the origin is very distant. The delicate Renaissance architecture of Italy was affected, even in its finest periods, by a tendency to throw out convex masses at the bases of its pillars; the wood-carvers of the 16th century adopted this bulged form as their first element of ornamentation, and these windows of Strasbourg are only imitations by the German peasantry of what, in its finest type, you must seek as far away as the Duomo of Bergamo.

But the burgher, or peasant, of Alsace enjoyed his rude imitation, adapted, as it was, boldly and frankly to the size of his house and the grain of the larch logs of which he built infinitely more than the refined Italian enjoyed the floral luxuriance of his marble: and all the treasures of a great exhibition could not have given him the tenth part of the exultation with which he saw the gable of his roof completed over its jutting fret-work; and wrote among the rude intricacies of its sculpture, in flourished black letter, that 'He and his

wife had built their house with God's help, and prayed Him to let them live long in it,—they, and their children.'

But it is not only the rustic method of architecture which I wish you to note in this plate; it is the rustic method of drawing also. The manner in which these blunt timber carvings are drawn by Prout is just as provincial as the carvings themselves. Born in a far-away district in England, and learning to draw, unhelped, with fishing-boats for his models; making his way instinctively until he had command of his pencil enough to secure a small income by lithographic drawing; and finding picturesque character in buildings from which all the finest lines of their carving had been effaced by time;—possessing also an instinct in the expression of such subjects so peculiar as to win for him a satisfying popularity, and, far better, to enable him to derive perpetual pleasure in the seclusion of country hamlets, and the quiet streets of deserted cities,—Prout had never any motive to acquaint himself with the refinements, or contend with the difficulties, of a more accomplished art. So far from this, his manner of work was, by its very imperfection in the most perfect sympathy with the subjects he enjoyed. The broad chalk touches in which he has represented to us this house at Strasbourg are entirely sufficient to give true idea of its effect. To have drawn its ornaments with the subtlety of Leonardesque delineation would only have exposed their faults and mocked their rusticity. The drawing would have become painful to you from the sense of the time which it had taken to represent what was not worth the labour, and to direct your attention to what could only, if closely examined, be a matter of offence. But here you have a simple and provincial draughtsman happily and adequately expressing a simple and provincial architecture; nor could builder or painter have become wiser, but to their loss.—*Works of John Ruskin*, vol. iv., Eagle's Nest, pp. 86, 88, 89.

COMPLETE

INDEX OF DRAWINGS.

PROUT LIST.

		Contributed by
1	Calais Town, see p. 48 . .	Mr. S. G. Prout
2	Calais Old Pier, p. 49 . .	,,
3	Figure Studies, p. 49 . .	,,
4	Abbeville. West Front of S. Wulfran, pp. 46, 50, 54 .	Mr. Ruskin
5	Abbeville. North-west Tower of S. Wulfran, pp. 33, 50 .	Mr. S. G. Prout
6	Abbeville. Photograph of the Porches of St. Wulfran .	,,
7	Amiens, pp. 31, 50 . .	,,
8	Dieppe. Chapel of the Holy Sepulchre, pp. 46, 50 .	,,
9	Evreux, pp. 35, 51	,,
10	Strasburg, pp. 35, 41, 52, 56 .	,,
11	Strasburg. Lithograph, p. 54	,,
12	Lisieux, pp. 46, 54, 56 . .	,,
13	Lisieux. Water-colour Drawing, pp. 43, 55 . . .	The Rev. O. Gordon
14	Bayeux, p. 57 . . .	Mr. S. G. Prout
15	Shop at Tours, p. 58 . .	,,
16	Rouen. The Tour de Beurre, p. 58.	,,
17	Rouen. Staircase in St. Maclou, pp. 48, 58 . .	,,

		Contributed by
18	Ghent, p. 59	Mr. S. G. Prout
19	Antwerp, pp. 35, 59	„
20	Augsburgh	Col. T. H. Sale
21	Brunswick, p. 60	Mr. James Knowles
22	Dresden, p. 60	Mr. S. G. Prout
23	Prague. The Bridge, pp. 46, 60	„
24	Prague. The Stadt Haus, 60	Mr. John Simon
25	Bamberg, p. 61	Mr. S. G. Prout
26	Nuremberg, p. 61	„
27	Lahnstein	Mr. W. H. Urwick
27*a*	Broadstairs	Mr. A. Keily
28	The Drachenfels, pp. 41, 61	Mr. S. G. Prout
29	Islands of the Rhine, p. 62	„
30	The Pfalz, p. 62	„
31	Worms. Water-colour Drawing, p. 62	Mr. G. W. Reid, F.S.A.
32	Worms. Pencil, pp. 46, 62	Mr. S. G. Prout
33	Four Studies of Peasants at Ratisbonne, p. 63	„
34	An Old Water-mill	Mr. Alfred Hunt
35	Ulm, p. 63	Mr. S. G. Prout
36	Ulm. Water-colour Drawing	Mrs. C. S. Whitmore
37	Swiss Costumes, p. 63	Mr. S. G. Prout
38	Old Hulk	The Fine Art Society
39	Chillon, p. 63	Mr. S. G. Prout
40	Chillon. The Dungeon, p. 63	„
41	Montreux	„
42	Waterfall under the Dent du Midi	„
43	Martigny. Village	„
44	A Castle	Mr. A. Hunt
45	Mayence	Mrs. C. S. Whitmore
46	Brieg	Mr. S. G. Prout
47	Domo d'Ossola, pp. 35, 4	Mr. Ruskin
48	Como, p. 35	Mr. S. G. Prout

		Contributed by
49	Verona	Mr. Ruskin
50	Verona. Water-colour Drawing	Mr. J. C. Ottway
51	Verona. Three Pencil Drawings	Mr. S. G. Prout
52	Ghent	Mr. W. J. Stuart
53	Sunrise	Mr. W. Scrivener
54	Martigny Village. Water-colour	Mr. Ruskin
55	Place of St. Mark's, Venice, pp. 43, 69	"
56	Venice. Ducal Palace from the West, p. 65	"
57	Venice. Ducal Palace from the East	Mr. S. G. Prout
58	S. Michael's Mount, Normandy, p. 65	"
59	The Grand Canal, Venice, Near the Rialto . .	"
60	The Doge's Palace, Venice, p. 67	The Right Hon. Lord Coleridge
61	Verona	Mr. J. Rhodes
62	Sunset	Mr. J. C. Scrivener
63	The Grand Canal, Venice .	Mr. S. G. Prout
64	The Bridge of Sighs . .	"
65	Bologna. San Giacomo, p. 35	"
66	Bologna. The Tower of Gausenda	Mr. Ruskin
67	Arqua. Petrarch's House .	Mr. S. G. Prout
68	Arqua. Petrarch's Tomb .	"
69	Vauxhall	Mr. H. Moore
70	Nuremberg. Dürer's House, p. 72	Mr. S. G. Prout
71	Rome. The Coliseum, pp. 35, 38	"

		Contributed by
72	Rome. The Fountain of Egeria	Mr. S. G. Prout
73	Kelso, p. 72	Mr. J. W. Gibbs
74	Rouen, p. 73	Mr. S. G. Prout
75	Study of Dutch Boats, p. 73	Mr. S. G. Prout
76	Neudersdorf, p. 73	"
77	Gutenfels, pp. 72, 73	"
78	An Old Rhine Bridge at Rheinsfelden p. 73	"
79	Munich, p. 73	"
80	Ypres, p. 73	"
81	Rubens' House, Antwerp p. 74	"
82	Caen, p. 74	Mr. E. Quaile
83	Falaise, p. 74	"
84	Old Gateway at Monmouth	Mr. A. F. Payne
85	Old Hulk	Mr. H. Howard-Keeling
86	Portico di Ottavia, Rome, p. 74	Mr. W. H. Urwick
87	Well at Strasburg, p. 74	Mr. J. C. Robinson
88	Well at Strasburg, p. 75	Mr. S. G. Prout
89	Well at Nuremberg, p. 75	"
90	Ulm	"
91	Prague. Tower of the Gate	"
92	Prague. Stadthaus	"
93	Brunswick. Rathhaus	"
94	Coblenz, p. 76	"
95	English Cottage, p. 21	Mr. Ruskin
96	Launceston, p. 77	Mr. W. Eastlake
97	Wreck of an East Indiaman	Hon. H. Strutt
98	Frankfort	Mr. A. F. Hollingsworth
99	Marine View	Mr. Safe
100	Verona	Mr. J. J. Wigzell
101	Interior of St. Julien at Tours	Mr. S. Castle
102	A Bridge	Mr. A. F. Payne
103	View of a Church	Rev. J. Townsend

SUPPLEMENTARY DRAWINGS.

		Contributed by
104	Calais	Mr. Ruskin
104*a*	The Aventine	„
105	The Ducal Palace and Bridge of Sighs	„
106	Ducal Palace, Foliage of South-west Angle . .	„
137	Pillar of the Piazzetta . .	„
108	Chiaroscuro Study of the same Pillar . . .	„
109	The Casa d'Oro . . .	„
110	Window on the Grand Canal	„
111	Abbeville Crocket . .	„
112	Oak-leaf	„
113	Moss and Oxalis . . .	„
114	Floral Decoration . . .	Mr. Rooke
115	Madonna and David . .	„
116	The Prophets . . .	„
117	Abbeville	
118	Picture of Abbeville . .	
119	Improvements in Modern London	

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120	The Wanderer	Mr. Jas. Orrock
121	The Eavesdropper	Mr. W. Quilter
122	Head of a Mulatto-Girl	Mr. F. Wigan
123	St. Martin's Church	Mr. Ellis
124	Somerset House	Mr. J. C. Robinson
125	Bullaces, p. 88	Mr. W. Quilter
126	Plums	Mr. Ruskin
127	Black Grapes and Strawberries	Mr. Edmund Sibeth
128	Magnum Bonum Plums	„
129	Black and White Grapes, p. 88	„
130	Grapes, p. 88	Mr. W. J. Galloway
131	Quinces, p. 89	Mr. Edmund Sibeth
132	'Love what you study, study what you love,' p. 7	Mr. George Gurney
133	Plums and Blackberry	Mr. Jas. Orrock
134	Black Grapes and Peach	Mr. Ruskin
135	Fruit	Mr. Alfred Harris
136	Black and White Grapes	Mr. Jas. Orrock
137	Grapes, Casket, and Peaches	Mr. A. W. Lyon
138	Hare (dead), p. 86	„
139	A Pigeon, p. 17	Mr. W. Quilter
140	Acorn	Mr. J. W. Knight
141	A Pigeon, p. 87	Mr. Ruskin
142	Flowers and Fruit with Butterfly, p. 83	Mr. George Gurney
143	Pine, Melon, and Grapes, p. 87	The Fine Art Society
144	Herrings and Red Mullet, p. 84	Mr. George Gurney
145	A Pigeon, pp. 17, 87	Mr. Ruskin

		Contributed by
146	Dead Chicken, p. 84 . .	Mr. Ruskin
147	A Bird's Nest, with May-blossom, p. 89 . . .	Mr. Fry .
148	Lilac and Bird's Nest, p. 89 .	Mr. Edmund Sibeth
149	Fungi, p. 88	Dr. Drage
150	Vase with Rose, and Basket with Fruit, p. 89 . .	Mr. Edmund Sibeth .
151	Flowers and Fruit, p. 89 .	Mr. Jas. Orrock
152	Apple Blossom, p. 89 . .	Mr. George Gurney
153	Dog-roses and Bird's Nest .	Mr. R. D. Farnworth
154	Primrose and Bird's Nest, p. 89	Mr. George Gurney
155	Birds' Nests and May Blossom	Mr. Ruskin
156	Primroses	Mr. Jas. Orrock
157	The Invalid	Mr. S. J. Thacker
158	Sunday Morning, p. 13 .	Mr. J. J. Wigzell
158*a*	'Study of a Head' . .	Mr. G. Peck
159	The Pitcher Girl . . .	Mr. Jas. Orrock
159*a*	Sketch for the drawing of the Fly-catcher . . .	Mr. H. G. Hine
160	Sketch for the drawing of the Cricketer	Mr. Carl Haag
161	The Gipsies, p. 90 . .	Mr. W. Quilter
162	The Gamekeeper . . .	"
163	Boy startled by a Wasp .	Mr. John Rhodes
164	A Young Artist . . .	Mr. George Gurney
165	Prayer	Mr. Prescott Hewett
166	Devotion	Mr. W. Quilter
167	Girl's Head	Mr. W. J. Galloway
168	Boy with a lighted Candle .	Mr. W. Beacall
169	The Blacksmith's Shop. .	Mr. W. H. Urwick
170	By the Wayside . . .	Mr. S. J. Thacker
171	The Blessing, p. 84 . .	Mr. Jas. Orrock
172	The Shy Sitter . . .	"

		Contributed by
173	My Father's Boots, p. 90 .	Mr. John Rhodes
174	An Interior, pp. 12, 18 . .	Mr. Ruskin
175	Boy with Lantern, p. 90 .	Mr. J. J. Elliott
176	Portrait of Hunt (painted by himself)	Mr. Sutton Palmer
176*	Grapes—Muscatel, Peach, and Spray of Raspberries. .	Mr. George Gurney
177	Portrait of Saml. Prout, by Wm. Hunt . . .	Mr. Haydon
178	Portrait of Wm. Hunt, by himself	Mr. Osler
179	A Green Melon, Grapes, and Plums	Sir John Swinburne, Bart.
180	Shells	Mr. Barnes
181	Dead Pigeons . . .	„
182	A Bit of Mont Blanc . .	„
183	Bird's Nest and Apple Blossom	Mr. W. Barfoot
184	The Art Critic . . .	„

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